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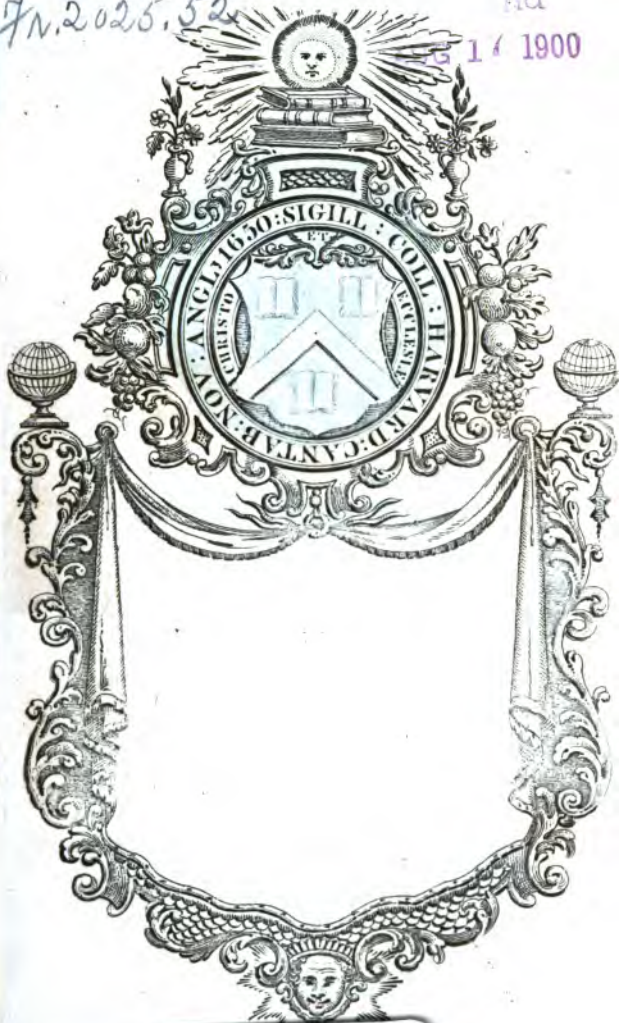


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FRANCE.

BY

Lady Sydney Owenson

LADY MORGAN.

Chaque jour de ma vie est une feuille dans mon livre.

THOMAS.

Che se riflessione, comento, e glossa,
Faccio talor sopra il brutal governo,
Lo fo, perchè ciascun confrontar possa
Con quei tempi antichissimi il moderno,
Onde felicitarsi appien possiamo
Dei fortunati secoli in cui siamo.

CASTL. *Gli Animali Parlanti.*

Canto xviii. Stroph 106.

VOLUME I.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY JAMES EASTBURN & CO.

At the Literary Rooms, Broadway.

E. & E. Hosford, Printers, Albany.

1817.

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PREFACE.



I OFFER the following work to public notice, with feelings of great intimidation and distrust. To an undertaking, at once arduous and delicate, I have brought none of those advantages most favourable to the *mechanism* of authorship; and in a series of narrated observations, over whose dryness the graces of fiction shed no extraneous charm, I have unavoidably been denied the *time* for leisurely composition. For it was necessary, from the nature of the work (intended to reflect the changeful images of the day, and in their true character and colouring,

“To catch, if I could, the Cynthias of the minute,”)

to preserve the passing fact in the strength of its original occurrence; to forestall anecdote and anticipate detail, ere the rapid current of public events should force them through the various channels of society, and lessen their value by extending their circulation.

Starting from the post with many abler competitors, my object was, if possible, to distance those by *time*, if I could not rival them in *skill*; and, in my effort to clear the ground, and to arrive *first* at the goal, I fear I have attained my end with more celerity than grace.

The following pages have been composed between the months of November and March, from the heads of

a journal, kept with regularity during my residence in France, in the year 1816; and having bound myself to my publisher to be ready for the press before April, I was obliged to compose *à trait de plume*, to send off the sheets chapter by chapter, without the power of detecting repetitions by comparison, and without the hope of correction from the perusal of proof sheets. Publishing in one country, and residing in another, it was not to be expected that the press would wait upon the chances of wind and tide, for returns either in or out of course.

To the inaccuracies of haste, a fault less excusable has been added; I mean the frequent recurrence of French sentences and dialogues, which break up and disfigure the text; a fault which arose from my anxiety to give impressions with all the warmth and vigour with which I received them; to preserve the *form* with the *spirit*; to repeat the jargon of the court, or the cottage, the well-turned point of the dutchess, or the *patois* of the peasant, as I caught and took them down *de vive voix* in my tablets, or retained and recorded them in my journal. While I thus endeavour to account for faults, I cannot excuse; and to solicit the indulgence of *that public* from whom I have never experienced severity, I make no effort to deprecate *professional criticism*, because I indulge no hope from its mercy. There is *one* review, at least, which must necessarily place me under the ban of its condemnation; and to which the sentiments and principles scattered through the following pages (though conceived and expressed in feelings the most remote from those of *local* or *party* policy) will afford an abundant source of accusation, as being foreign

PREFACE.



to its own narrow doctrines, and opposed to its own exclusive creed. I mean the *Quarterly Review*. It may look like presumption to hope, or even to fear its notice; but I, at least, know by experience, that in the omniscience of its judgment it can stoop

“To break a butterfly upon a wheel.”

It is now nearly nine years since that review selected me as an example of its unsparing severity; and, deviating from the true object of criticism, made its strictures upon one of the most hastily composed and insignificant of my *early* works a vehicle for an unprovoked and wanton attack upon the personal character and principles of the author. The slander thus hurled against a young and unprotected female, struggling in a path of no ordinary industry and effort, for purposes sanctified by the most sacred feelings of nature, happily fell hurtless. The public of an enlightened age, indulgent to the critical errors of pages composed for its amusement, under circumstances, not of vanity or choice, but of necessity, has, by its countenance and favour, acquitted me of those charges under which I was summoned before their awful tribunal, and which tended to banish the accused from society, and her works from circulation: for “licentiousness, profligacy, irreverence, blasphemy, libertinism, disloyalty, and atheism,” were no venial errors. Placed by that public in a definite rank among authors, and in no undistinguished circle of society, alike as *woman* and as author, beyond the injury of malignant scurrility, whatever form it may assume, I would point out to those who have yet to struggle through the arduous and painful career that I have ran,

the feebleness of unmerited calumny, and encourage those who receive with patience and resignation the awards of dignified and legitimate criticism, to disregard and condemn the anonymous slander with which party spirit arms its strictures, under the veil of literary justice.

In thus recurring to the severe chastisement which my early efforts received from the judgment of the *Quarterly Review*, it would be ungrateful to conceal that it placed

“ My bane and antidote at once before me,”

and that in accusing me of “ licentiousness, profligacy, irreverence, blasphemy, libertinism, disloyalty, and atheism,” it presented a *nostrum* of universal efficacy, which was to transform my *vices* into *virtues*, and to render me, in its own words, “ not indeed a good writer of novels, but a *useful friend*, a *faithful wife*, a *tender mother*, and a respectable and happy *mistress of a family*.”

To effect this purpose, “ so devoutly to be wished,” it prescribed a simple remedy: “ To purchase immediately a *spelling book*, to which, in process of time, might be added a *pocket dictionary*, and to take a few lessons in joining-hand ; which, superadded to a little common sense, in place of idle raptures,” were finally to render me that valuable epitome of female excellence, whose price Solomon has declared above rubies.

While I denied the crimes thus administered to, I took the advice for the sake of its results ; and like “ *Cœlebs* in search of a wife,” with his ambulating virtues, I set forth with my *MAVOR* and my *ENTICK* in search of that conjugal state, one of the necessary qualifications for my

future excellencies. With my dictionary in my pocket; with my spelling book in one hand, and my copperplate improvements in the other, I entered my probation; and have at last (thanks to the Quarterly Review) obtained the reward of my calligraphic and orthographic acquirements. As it foretold, I am become, in spite of the "seven deadly sins" it laid to my charge, "not indeed a good writer of novels," but I trust "a respectable," and, I am *sure*, "a happy mistress of a family."

In the fearful prophecy so long made, that I should never write a *good* novel, the Quarterly Review, in its benevolence, will at least not be displeased to learn that I have written some that have been *successful*; and that while my Glorvinas, Luximas, and Lolottes, have pleaded my cause at home, like "*very Daniels*," they have been received abroad with equal favour and indulgence; and that *O'Donnel* has been transmitted to its author in three different languages. Having thus, I hope, settled "my long arrear of GRATITUDE with Alonzo," I am now ready to begin a new score; and await the sentence of my quondam judge, in the spirit of one

"Who neither courts nor fears
His favour nor his hate."

In a work which bears the sweeping title of "*France*," (a title adopted by necessity, because none other was left me,) it would be a strange solecism to omit all notice of the jurisprudence, medical science, and finance of that country; subjects connected with its most vital existence, but far beyond my limited sphere of enquiry. At my request, my husband has undertaken to furnish

some sketches on these points, which form the pages of the appendix.

For the authenticity of the great mass of anecdotes with which I have endeavoured to relieve the weariness of narrative, I can no further vouch, than that I obtained them from persons distinguished by their rank, talents, and high respectability; and that I give them as I heard them in the saloon or the boudoir. I have omitted many that were doubtful, even though they were amusing; and I have transcribed few that were not corroborated by persons of very different principles and interests. My object was to come at the *truth*, and I trust I have pretty generally succeeded.

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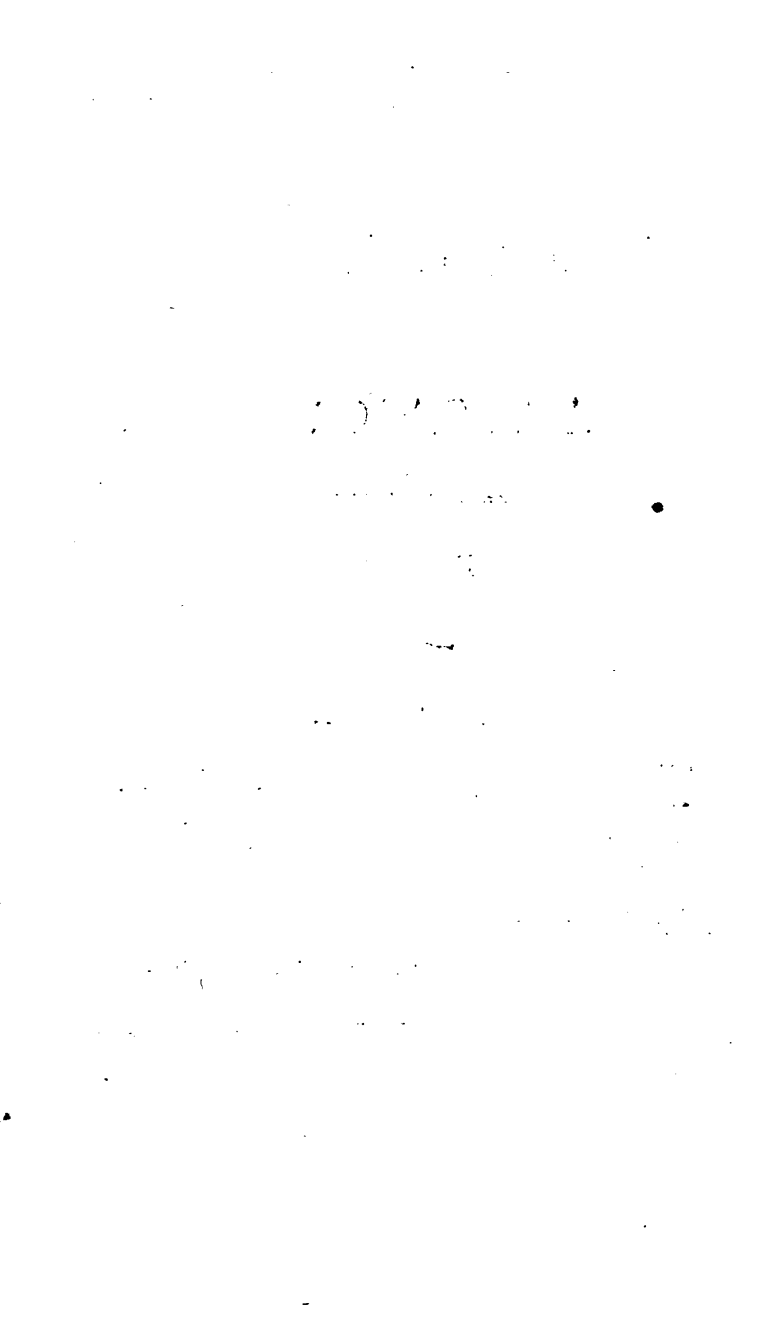
FRANCE.

BOOK I.

PEASANTRY.

"L'homme doit pouvoir déployer ses facultés, disposer de ses richesses, pourvoir à ses besoins, avec une liberté entière. L'intérêt général de chaque société, loin d'ordonner d'en restreindre l'exercice, défend au contraire d'y porter atteinte ; et dans cette partie de l'ordre public, le soin d'assurer à chacun les droits qu'il tient de la nature est encore à la fois la seule politique utile, le seul devoir de la puissance sociale, et le seul droit que la volonté générale puisse légitimement exercer sur les individus."

CONDORCET, Progrès de l'Esprit.



FRANCE.



BOOK I.



THE PEASANTRY.

The Peasantry before the Revolution.—Condition of the Peasantry arising out of the Revolution.—The Labourers.—Farmers.—Small Proprietors.—Military Labourers.—Farmer of D'Orsonville.—Cottager of the Vallée of Dorsai.—Rural Economy.—Market Day at Montreuil.—Peasant Dwelling.—Morals.—Domestic Manners and Affections.—Religion.—Religious Processions.—Popular Superstitions.—Diet.—Hospitality.—Mendicity.—Charity.—Costume.—Physiognomy.—The Basque.—Summary.

POLITICAL revolution, the inevitable result of undue preponderance in some order of the state in which it occurs, presents, in the moral subversion it occasions, an image of those fearful symptoms, by which nature in her great volcanic struggles rights herself, and vindicates her violated laws; and the convulsions of disorganizing matter best typify the throes and efforts of social and political dissolutions. Fermentation works alike in both: destructive particles are forced to the surface: much of

what is good is overwhelmed in the impetuosity of the torrent : much of what is bad reigns paramount through its hour of necessary agency. The evil, however, which caused the explosion is at length removed ; and these tumultuous actions, subsiding into quiescence, terminate by a necessary causation in the re-establishment of harmony and order. A new form of things presents itself ; new arrangements arise out of the elementary wreck of exhausted systems ; and in political, as in natural science, new facts are inscribed on the tables of human experience ; new combinations extend the sphere of human views ; and new lights beam upon the collected mass of human knowledge, to correct its theories and to fortify its conclusions.

When the burning floods and frightful explosions of Vesuvius poured ruin and desolation on every object within the sphere of its convulsed action, the elder Pliny was seen exposing himself to its varied forms of danger in the cause of knowledge, and for the benefit of his species : his spirit soaring in sublimity above the wreck of matter, as nature, with all her awful secrets, stood revealed before him. But to the greatest political explosion that time has ever witnessed, or history recorded ; to the revolution of France few philosophical Plinys have brought their cool and unbiassed scrutiny. The event which has shaken the greatest dynasties of the earth, torn the creed of the most powerful religion, subdued opinions coeval with record, and weakened ties twisted with the very instincts of nature, has rarely been viewed through any medium but that of passion, or discussed in any language but that of prejudice.

It has, indeed, in its progress, been contemplated with well-merited horror. It has dazzled the visionary, it has

frightened the timid. The oppressor and the oppressed have alike turned its events to their purpose ; to exhibit it as a warning, or to seize upon it as an example. But while history with her impartial testimony exposes the causes of the French revolution, in the increasing abuses of the government, and in the consequent demoralization of the people, its effects on the nation, out of whose wrongs it arose, are only to be estimated in the interior of society, and in the detailed minutæ of every-day existence. It is by an intimate acquaintance with the changes impressed upon all the various conditions and classes of the population, that its good and evil can alone be appreciated ; and when prejudice disfigures, and policy misrepresents, philanthropy will exultingly point to domestic ameliorations, and philosophy triumph in the justification of her theories.

"Liberty and property," says Voltaire, "is the cry of the English ; it is the cry of nature :" and he adds, in his own peculiar style, "*Il vaut mieux que St. George at mon droit ; St. Denis, et mont joie.*" To the oppressed and miserable peasantry of France all natural expression was denied. With every feeling of humanity violated, with every social institute perverted, they had learned by experience that complaint was unavailing, and resistance ruin.* An event, however, occurred, which, forwarded by their wrongs, was destined to work their redemption ; and the total overthrow of that frightful system of feudality, which had so long crushed them into slavery, was among the first

* See *Les Dictionnaires des Fiefs* de M. de Tremville, et de Prenaudon.

The resistance made in La Bretagne, under the reign of Louis XIV, to the tyranny and insupportable exactions of the government, was punished with a severity that approached to extermination ! The city of Rennes was nearly depopulated ; and the troops were every where let loose, to commit every species of violence on the defenceless inhabitants.

and best works of the revolution. To form a just idea of the magnitude and proportions of the giant structure, as it stood, frowning over the waste it had occasioned, the production of a few scattered fragments will suffice ; nor is any minute detail of its complicated deformities necessary to excuse or to justify the reaction, which followed evils so harshly inflicted, and so patiently sustained.

The *corvée* (which, in giving France such noble roads, robbed the peasant of his sole possessions, his time and his labour) tore him not unfrequently from his family and home to labour in a distant province ; nor were the direct evils belonging to this system the only means of oppression to its victims. The *corvée*, in the hands of petty tyranny, became a convenient instrument to hold out as a threat, or to inflict as a punishment ; and occasionally it was even applied to remove an uncomplying husband or vigilant father from the protection of his family, and the vindication of his honor.

The *droit de chasse*, while it ravaged the fields, destroying the full half of their produce, estimated the life of a hare above the liberty of a man ; and where want afforded such irresistible impulses to violate its enactments, bound its victims, for a conventional offence, to the oar of a galley.*

The *droit coutumier*, or code of customary law, varied in every province ; and by its uncertainty and disa-

* " When I had a house at Epinay, sur Seine," said an English friend of mine, who resided in France before the Revolution, " I observed every day a large water cart brought from the river to the house of the Marechal D'Aubierre, who resided near me, and drawn by six men in harness. On enquiry, I found that these yoke-mates had killed some of the marshal's game, and that he had thus commuted their sentence, instead of removing them from their families to the galleys at Marseilles."

greement with itself, multiplied the evils of litigation to the poor, and frequently extinguished even the hope of justice to the wronged.

Of the *gabelle*, so oppressive in its exactions as to become a spectre to the imaginations of the ignorant and the poor, it is impossible to give an adequate representation. Whatever was most tyrannical in government, and most absurd in morals, was to be found in the enactments calculated to raise the revenue, and ensure the collection of this detestable tax. Every morsel of meat the peasant might possess was previously estimated, and his consumption of salt, the excised commodity, regulated by computation. The smallest infringement of the dreadful code was un pityingly punished by confinement, (temporary, or for life) on board the galleys.* Every thing, therefore, that appeared amongst the simple peasantry, either novel or mysterious, goading or insupportable, was placed in their apprehension to the account of the *gabelle*.†

The *tithe*, that vexatious tax upon the most laborious class of society, for the support and luxury of the most indolent, was rendered more burthensome, from the multitude of other imposts which fell upon the cultivator.

The *taille*, and indeed the whole direct taxation of the kingdom, fell exclusively upon the people, the

* Des enfans de treize ans, condamnés aux galères, pour avoir été trouvés avec leurs pères, convaincus de contrabande.—Voilà le code du fisc ; voilà l'indulgence pour le fisc ; on lui a vendu le sang innocent ! et on se tait !—*Dupaty Lettres sur l'Italie.*

† “ Un curé avoit reçu, devant ses paroissiens, une *pendule*. Ils se mirent tous à crier, ” que c'étoit la *gabelle*, et qu'ils le voyoient fort bien. Le curé habile leur dit, et sur le même ton, point du tout, mes enfans, ce n'est pas la *gabelle*, c'est le *jubilé*. En même tems les voilà tous à genoux. Que dites-vous du bon esprit de ces gens là ? ” *Lettres de Sévigné*, vol. iiii.

estates and persons of the privileged classes being wholly exempt from imposition. The personal slavery of a large portion of the population, especially in *Franche-Comté*, of which the clergy held a considerable portion in *main morte*, embraced in itself all that was most odious in the legal, sanctioned outrages upon human reason and human feeling, all the multiplicity of oppression which filled up the code of feudal rights. The peasantry, thus abandoned to contempt and to neglect, and cultivating a plenteous soil for others, which they could never hope to reap for themselves, submitted from generation to generation with a debasing acquiescence to their iron destiny; and though they lightened the burthen of a miserable existence by constitutional gaiety; though they sung in chains and danced in rags; yet how sensibly they suffered, was marked* in their meagre features and attenuated forms; how keenly they felt, was evinced in the reaction of their

* Their numerous little insurrections in the provinces, and the horrible outrages which their despair urged them to commit, even against nature, is a sufficient proof of their sensibility to their wrongs.

"Un pauvre homme passementier dans le faubourg St. Marceau, étoit taxé à dix écus pour un impôt sur les *maîtrises*. Il ne les avoit pas; on le presse et represse, il demand du tems, on le lui refuse—on prend son pauvre lit, et sa pauvre *écuelle*,—quand il se vit en cet état, la rage s'empara de son cœur; il coupe la gorge à trois de ses enfans, qui étoient dans sa chambre—sa femme sauve le quatrième, et s'enfuit; le pauvre homme est au Châtelet, il sera pendu dans un jour. Il dit que tout son déplaisir, c'est de n'avoir pas tué sa femme, et l'enfant qu'elle a sauvé." The conclusion of this description is curious, and quite in character both with the times and the writer.—"On devoit partir aujourd'hui pour Fontainebleau, où les plaisirs devoient devenir des peines, par leur multiplicité."

Lettres de Saignes, vol. iii.

This dreadful system of taxation, which maddened the lower classes into murder, only went to supply the expenses of a voluptuous prince, and to multiply the pleasures of his court, till they became "pains."

feelings, when circumstances placed the sword of retribution in their hands, and vengeance exceeded her customary horrors, in the ferocious deeds of the *Carmagnoles* and the *Marseillois*.

* * * * *

It has always been observed by the travellers who visited France before the revolution, and particularly by the English, and by agricultural travellers, that the peasantry of that country were a singularly laborious and pains-taking race, enduring much, and suffering patiently.—Mr. Young gives it as his opinion, that “they would have improved the country, if they had formed any part in a system, the principles of which tended towards national prosperity.” But no such system appeared, until the occurrence of that great *bouleversement*, out of whose principles of destruction and regeneration the present improved condition of the peasant population of France arose.

England, in the sixteenth century, set a great example to the rest of Europe, when she seized upon the overgrown possessions of the church, and converted the unhallowed fruits of fraud and impiety to the benefit of the state. Men, devoted by their institutions and orders to poverty and humility, engrossed the riches of the country, and preserved a twofold influence, spiritual and temporal, subversive of the interests of society. But, the original abuse destroyed, the undue influence declined, superstition lost ground, and wealth circulated with a more equal and salutary distribution.* What the

* Of the mode of assigning lands to the church in France, many curious instances were discovered during the revolution, from the ancient archives of the cathedrals. In 1470, Louis XI. assigned over the whole *Comté de Boulogne* to the Virgin Mary, and promised to do her homage

despotism of Henry VIII. effected in England, the democratic principles of the revolution accomplished in France;* and the sale of the national domains was one of the strongest measures of this extraordinary event, producing incalculable benefit to the lower and agricultural classes, while the mode in which this measure was executed was eminently constituted to attach the peasantry to the revolutionary cause, and to induce them to give their aid and sanction to a political change, which, in emancipating them from slavery, added property to freedom, and converted five hundred thousand labouring serfs into independent proprietors. In the public sale of the national domains, the government became the agent of the peasantry: a certain portion of land, ordinarily contiguous to his dwelling, was given to each peasant who presented himself as a purchaser; time was granted him to pay the purchase-money, and a

for it, in the person of the Abbé de Notre Dame de Boulogne; but, says a national writer, "D'abord cet hommage religieux se rendit sur l'autel, et s'offrit directement au saint. Bientôt l'évêque, l'abbé, le titulaire du bénéfice se plaça entre l'autel et le pieux vassal, et reçut l'hommage, au nom du saint. Insensiblement on oublia le saint, et l'ecclésiastique s'attribua tout l'honneur, en qualité de bénéficiaire."

* The inhabitants of Condon, in the department du Gers, gave an eighth, instead of a tenth, in consequence of the clergy of the diocese having promised to liberate annually from purgatory two hundred and fifty souls of their friends and relations, and to conduct them to Paradise straight.

Monsieur Falconet, in his work on the necessity of restoring all the church lands to the clergy, ascribes all the horrors of the revolution to the violation of their sacred property. He strongly recommends the measure of turning adrift all the present proprietors, and of restoring the domains of the rich monasteries, which were bequeathed to heaven by many a pious penitent, "comme fondation pour le remède de son âme." He mentions *Mirabeau* incidentally as un *Mirabeau*. This pamphlet has many admirers among the royalist party.

small sum was advanced, to enable the new proprietor to commence the cultivation of his little farm. "Give a man secure possession of a bleak rock," says a celebrated agriculturalist, "and he will convert it into a garden; give him a few years' lease of a garden, and he will turn it into a desert." The truth of this position was strongly illustrated in the peasant proprietors of France; and notwithstanding the evil influence which the spirit of foreign conquest in their late ruler must have had upon the resources and industry of the people, yet when the allies first approached the frontiers of the French territory, they invaded a country whose peasantry were the best conditioned, and most prosperous of any nation in Europe. In visiting the extensive farm of a person of rank and fortune, in the Isle of France, and remarking to him the apparent opulence of his tenantry; and the general prosperity of the country, he made the following observations, which spoke equally in favour of the moral and physical condition of the people: "It is impossible to foresee what may be the consequences of the enormous depredations committed by the foreign troops, when added to the losses already sustained by the military systems of Napoleon. The contributions already levied are beyond the resources of the nation; but with respect to our peasantry, it is quite certain, that, besides the improvement of their general condition by the revolution, they have also made a provision of energy and good sense, which strengthens and enlightens them to meet every attack of adversity, and which they did not possess thirty years back."

It is, however, neither possible nor true, that, in this general prosperity, all are opulent in a class where so much must depend on individual exertion and peculiari-

ty of circumstances, on the nature of the soil, or the character of a province. It would be rather a public evil than a general good, if an order did not exist which had only its daily industry and good-will to depend on : but even the least favoured among the labouring class feel some reflection from the prosperity that surrounds them. No longer "*un peuple serf, corvéable et taillable,*"* all are alike free to offer their labour for adequate remuneration ; and all now feel that this newly-possessioned power of self-disposal is property, in itself.

* * * * *

The peasantry of France may perhaps be divided into the distinct classes of proprietor, farmer-tenant (*fermier*), and labourer. A French writer has termed the labouring class of a free state "*la pépinière des soldats.*" It was on this class that the law of military conscription fell with most frequency, though not with most weight ; for the labouring peasant made but little sacrifice, when he flung away the spade for the musket, and left the track of his plough for the march of victory. From the ranks, however, so often supplied by this class of men, arose many of those brave commanders, who planted the eagle-standard of France in almost every country in Europe ; for it was a maxim with the chief who reigned in military supremacy over all,

* The titles of feudality, as M. de Mably observes, are sufficient proofs of "l'asservissement dans lequel le despotisme des seigneurs tenoit le peuple, et qui les rendoit les maîtres absolus de sa fortunes et de ses forces." Among these seignioral titles were the following : "Seigneur haut et puissant, seigneur redouté, et très redouté." The immense surface of France must naturally produce great variety in the characters and conditions of the people. In Brittany they are much less civilized, and in some districts of the west and north much less opulent, than in the other parts of the kingdom.

That he who doth i'th' wars
 More than his captain can, becomes
 His captain's captain. SHAKESPEARE.

Michael Ney, a young hussar, distinguished himself, while yet in the ranks, by unparalleled intrepidity; and, gallantly fighting his way through every subaltern degree of his profession, was presented by his colonel-general with a company, on the sole recommendation of his own merits. The simple hussar became in time a marshal of France: his sovereign raised him to the highest rank in the state, by the titles of Duke D'Elchingen and Prince of Moskowa; and his country conferred on him that title, "greater than all," when, in her gratitude for his services, she named him "*le brave des braves*."

The disbanding of the veteran troops of France has obliged most of its subaltern members to return to the obscure labours of their youth; and, foregoing

"The grappling vigour and rough frown of war,"

with minds long trained to other objects, and habits long tempered to other views, the heroes of Marengo and of Austerlitz again appear following the plough in their native villages, and are of necessity become "hewers of wood and drawers of water."

I remember to have met one of these military labourers, these veteran "*braves*," who had been driven with an army almost frantic behind the Loire, engaged in the inglorious labours of the spade, and working on the estate of a soldier, who had himself long since turned his "sword into a ploughshare," after having wielded it only in the service of virtue and of freedom.

I was one morning, in the summer of 1816, walking under the venerable towers of Chateau la Grange, and leaning on the arm of its illustrious master, general the marquis de la Fayette (and who would not boast of being supported by that arm, which raised the standard of independence in America, and placed her banner above the dungeons of France?) The figure of a labourer, who was working on the moat which nearly surrounded the chateau, struck me as being both distinguished and singular. He was a tall athletic man, something advanced in life. As we approached, he touched the little embroidered cap, which did not conceal his grey locks, and drawing up into an erect posture, gave the military salute, which M. de la Fayette most punctiliously returned. As the labourer resumed his spade, I asked the general, in English, whether this was not one of the disbanded soldiers of the Loire. "I should suppose," he replied, "a distinguished one; for I find he is a member of the legion of honour, and you may perceive the ensign of his order glittering through the rents in his jacket." The man raised his eyes to us, as we now stood beside him; and perceiving that the general was looking at his work, he asked with anxiety, "*Vous en êtes content, mon général, j'espère?*" "*Mais oui, mon ami, parfaitement, cela va bien,*" replied the general. "*Bon, bon,*" returned the soldier, and resumed his labours with all the vigour of an able pioneer. "That brave fellow," said M. la Fayette, as we pursued our walk, "has passed twenty years in the service of his country. He is covered with scars. He had already obtained the subaltern distinctions of his profession, and in another year was to have been appointed a commissioned officer; *on attendant*, he received the cross of the legion of honour,

and thought himself amply recompensed for all his services. It was thus by a few laurel crowns, that the Romans became masters of the world. This disbanded veteran returned, a few weeks back, to his native village, which is at this moment visible through the trees of that dark wood : he offered his services to my *con-cierge*, who accepted them. He labours through the week in his tattered fustian jacket, and gratifies all that is left of his military pride, by exposing his badge of honour to the admiration of the rustic crowd, with which he mingles at mass on Sundays."

* * * * *

But the ranks of the labouring class are not alone filled by the disbanded privates of the army ; for many (and there is a romantic sadness in the idea), many whose brows have recently been shaded by the "*panache blanc*" of military distinctions, whose voice was law, and whose breath was command (now expelled to make way for "daintier captains"), are driven by necessity to earn their daily bread by daily labour.

: One of my gallant countrymen, attached to the English army now in France, was stationed with his company in a village at some distance from the head-quarters : he was returning with his dogs, after a sporting ramble in the neighbourhood, when he overtook a team, whose driver displayed a costume at once military and civil—his waggoner's frock contrasting with a large cocked hat. As they pursued the same route, the English officer endeavoured to enter into conversation ; but was answered with that *brusquerie*, which intimates impatience of obtrusion. A few useless questions on the state of the game in that country had nearly finished an intercourse so churlishly supported, when the waggoner,

casting his eyes on the undress uniform of the Englishman, asked, in his turn, some questions as to the state of the English army, in terms sufficiently technical to betray his experience on the subject to which he had so abruptly adverted. The conversation became interesting: it turned on the war in Spain. The Englishman alluded to the "hot work" of a particular day. "Were you in that engagement?" demanded the waggoner eagerly.

"I was wounded in it," said the Englishman.

"And I," said the Frenchman, "was wounded in it also."

"I was attached to such a division."

"I commanded the battallion opposed to that division."

"I am addressing an officer of the French army then?" said Captain ***, moving his hat.

"I had once that honour," answered the Frenchman, returning the bow; then, after a moment given to dejected thoughtfulness, he rallied from his abstraction, wished his companion a good morning, and springing on the seat of his waggon, cried, "*Vif, vif*," to his horses, and drove rapidly on. When Captain *** reached his village inn, he perceived his military acquaintance leading out his horse to water. He enquired of the *aubergiste*, who he was: "*Ah pour celui-là*," replied the innkeeper, "*c'est un de nos licenciés, c'est le capitaine de B—, un brave homme! c'est grand dommage! mais voilà comme sont les choses dans notre pauvre France. Cependant, diable! que voulez-vous?**"

*Une quantité prodigieuse d'officiers sans moyens sont renvoyés du service. et mis à la demi-solde; tandis qu'on forme des corps entiers des jeunes gens, à peine échappés du collège. Ces jeunes gens, commandés par

The agricultural surface of France is divided into what is called, in the language of the country, "*le pays de grande, et de petite culture.*" In the former, the size of the farms has been little affected by the revolution: the only difference that has occurred is, that several farms belonging to one landlord may have been purchased by the farmers who formerly cultivated them, or by a small proprietor, whose exertions are confined to the ground he has bought. The possession of small plots of ground by the day-labourers has become very frequent; and it is sometimes usual in these countries to let them to the great farmers who are desirous of having them, to complete the quantity of land which the size of their establishment demands.

The *pays de petite culture* is composed of small farms, for the cultivation of which the landlord finds the tenant in horses and ploughs, and divides with him the profits. Upon the large farms the condition of the tenant is very much like that of our own English farmers; and in the *pays de petite culture* there exists a race, long disappeared from England, of poor but independent yeomen, who rear their families in a degree of comfort as perfect, as it is remote from luxury. The dwelling of a French farmer presents the same scene of rural bustle, activity, and industry, as is usually found in the English farm-house. The women always appear full of occupation and energy, and share, in common with their husbands, fathers, and brothers, the toil and anxiety of their condition.*

des vieillards hors d'état de supporter les fatigues militaires, sont institués pour remplacer cette terrible garde impériale, qui toujours dans la bataille décida la victoire. *Examen rapide du gouvernement des Bourbons.*

* "C'est un avantage multiplié partout, depuis la révolution," said a French farmer to us, speaking of the improved state of the labourers; "que les domestiques des fermes et les journaliers possèdent une maison et quelques morceaux de terre, en addition aux gages."

While we were on a visit in the canton of La Beauce, at the chateau D'Orsonville, the seat of the marquis and marquise de Colbert Chabanais (and it is a delightful link in the chain of association, which leads me back to days so happily passed,) we accompanied *la belle châtelaine*, the lady of the castle, on a visit to a rural bride, the wife of one of their farmer-tenants. We found her already deeply engaged in all the bustle of housewifery, standing in the midst of a pile of brown loaves, which she was preparing for the labourers.

"*Vous voilà déjà occupée du ménage, ma bonne Madelaine,*" said marquis de Colbert, as we entered.

"*Eh ! mais, mon Dieu, oui, Madame, pourquoi pas ?*" replied Madelaine, shaking the flour from what Madame de C—— called "*son luxe de jupe,*"—the superfluous quantity of her well-plaited cloth petticoat well meriting the epithet. Madelaine then, with evident pride in her newly acquired opulence, did the honours of her house, by requesting us to walk into the *grande chambre*, or best parlour, and to leave "*la maison,*"* as she called the kitchen, or place of general reception; where an immense marmite, bubbling over the wood fire, sent forth the fume of the savoury ragout preparing for the family supper.

La grande chambre exhibited one of those excessively high and excellent beds, which it is the ambition of every French peasant to possess; and its old brocaded hangings seemed to boast a nobler origin, than the fresh and snowy counterpane which accompanied them. An *armoire*, antecedent (by its structure) to the days of

* It is customary, in many parts of England, to call this part of a farmer's cottage "the house."

Bonle, held the bridal wardrobe, or rustic *trousseau*.* Madelaine, drew our attention also to the high chimney-piece, where ticked a handsome pendule, in order to point out to us her taste and her piety, exhibited in a piece of ornamental wax-work, representing two young lovers burning in red worsted flames, fond and devoted as the death-enamoured martyrs of M. Chateaubriand; "*Ah, qu'elle est gentile ! n'est-ce pas, Mesdames ?—c'est vraiment une coëffure charmante !*" There was in this dwelling of the farmer† every appearance of competency and comfort ; and though it wanted those finishing touches of neatness to be found in an English farmhouse, there was no absence of accommodation. Good beds, stout furniture, well-sashed windows, and spacious hearths, secured to its inhabitants all the prime necessities of an habitual dwelling, which was never to be exchanged for the chilling misery of a parish poor-house; except, indeed, a new order of things should provide such an asylum against that indigence, which the increased taxation, and contributions levied on the savings of industry, for the maintenance of foreign troops, may draw down upon the prosperous peasantry of the land at some future day.

In the course of a morning's walk in the neighbourhood of the chateau D'Orsonville, a sudden shower of rain obliged us to take shelter in the cottage of a *fermier*. We found two young women busied in folding up linen of an excellent quality and colour ; and when we had

* "*Trousseau*," a portion of house-linen and clothes, which brides of all ranks in France bring as a dowry.

† I instance this *farm-house* in La Beauce, as a fair sample of the many farm-houses we visited in France. In Normandy I saw many superior. In Piccardy and Artois they were in general inferior.

reckoned twelve pair of sheets, we could not help observing they were rich in house-linen. "*Mais ce n'est rien, cela,*" replied one of the girls, and took some pains to convince us that what we saw would go but a very short way in providing beds for the labourers in harvest time. Mentioning this circumstance to Monsieur de C—— at dinner that day, he assured me that it was not unusual for a *fermier* to have one hundred and fifty pair of sheets for the use of his family; for that, in general, the French farmers were sufficiently opulent to indulge in a luxury, indispensable in France among all classes, good linen and good beds. Among his own tenantry, he added, there were some who were supposed to be worth two or three thousand pounds, English money; and that a few days before, one of his *fermiers* had given a portion of a thousand Napoleons with his daughter in marriage.

Such is the condition of these small proprietors of lands, of which their fathers were considered the *live stock*, when "*nulla terre, sans seigneur,*" was the maxim of the times.

* * * * *

There is something exquisitely gracious in the contemplation of that state of things, that true golden age of a country, "where every rood of ground maintains its man," and "*les petits propriétés*" of France enjoyed by the most numerous class of the peasantry, whether purchased by the savings of the *fermier* or *vigneron*, or whether obtained in the early part of the Revolution from the sale of the national domains, present a state of rural independence, extremely favourable to the views, and highly gratifying to the feelings of philanthropy.

We were travelling to the *château* of one of our hospitable French friends, when an accident, which happened to our carriage, obliged us to stop for an hour in the little village, which stands at the entrance of the valley Dorsai. We resolved to turn our misadventure to account, by visiting the *chateau* of the celebrated Madame Cottin, which, we understood, was but at a walking distance. She, indeed, was no more! But the dwelling which has once been consecrated by the residence of *Genius*, (be it palace, or hovel,) is a shrine to which the mind and imagination naturally turn with pilgrim devotion; and the valley of Dorsai, amidst whose shades the character of Malek Adel was created, will long preserve an interest, independent of its own loveliness and romantic beauty.

Having ordered "*une petite collation*," (as the *aubergiste* called a fillet of veal roasting at the fire for the breakfast of accidental travellers,) we walked down towards the valley. Our steps were soon arrested by the appearance of a very handsome *chateau*, which hung over a pretty river, and which, as a large placard informed us, was "*en vente*." We asked a young peasant (who was eating his *gouté* of raw artichokes and bread and butter at the gates) who had been its late owner. He answered, "Le Marechal Arrighi, the cousin of the Emperor, now an *exile*," and the *chateau* and grounds were to be sold immediately. He could give us no further information, and we proceeded on our ramble. The sultriness of the weather had produced an insupportable thirst, which trees bowed down with fruit on every side tempted us to allay: but as this is a depredation rarely committed in France, and as property of this description is held sacred, in proportion as it lies exposed, we

thought it wisest to offer ourselves as purchasers of the "golden produce" of a *verger*, which nearly surrounded a very neat cottage by the pathway-side we had accidentally pursued.

To the threshold of a French cottage there is no barrier: it is entered not, indeed, without ceremony, for there are certain forms of courtesy never dispensed with in France by any rank; but it is entered by the stranger, as by the neighbour, without hesitation, in the certainty of a civil, if not of a cordial reception.

We found the interior of the cottage infinitely superior to its external appearance: a clean and lofty bed occupied a little alcove in the outside room; some articles of old china ornamented one shelf, and a few books another; while the "*pot au feu*" was bubbling over a clear fire under the special superintendence of an aged dame, who received us very good humoredly. To our question, whether we could get any fruit to purchase, she replied "*mais très volontierstenez*;" and she hobbled to a little door which opened into a very small farm yard, where a cow, a mule, and a pig, were lying amicably together under a sort of shed, on which some flax lay drying in the sun—" *tenez, Monsieur, et Madame!*" "You will have the goodness to cross that little *basse cour*, you will then find yourselves in the *verger*, where my son-in-law and my daughter will have the honour to receive your commands: they are both at work there." We found the daughter (a middle-aged woman) at her distaff, under a tree laden with green-gages, of which she gave us the plunder for the sum of six *sous* (three-pence,) exhorting us to fill our handkerchiefs, with repeated "*prenez-en donc, ne vous gênez pas!*"

We observed that the little domain of which she was mistress was composed of a *potager*, a vineyard, and a quantity of fruit trees and flowers. It was a delicious spot, and placed in a most delicious situation. We asked her, by what tenor her husband held it. She replied with vivacity, "*mais c'est à nous ; c'est un petit propriétaire ; tenez, voici notre mari—il vous racontera tout ça.*"

"*Notre mari*" was a tall robust well-looking man. He approached us with a low bow, and a spade over his shoulder. To our questions, repeated by his wife, he replied with the intelligence and frankness peculiar to the lower classes of France.

This little estate of a few "*arpens de terre*" had been obtained by his father, on the sale of the national domains.* He had himself served in all the wars of the republic, and under the Emperor ; but on the death of his father he had left the army, and took possession of his little patrimony, for he had no brothers or sisters to divide it with, according to the new law of succession.† He said their chief means of subsistence arose from the cultivation of their vines, which enabled them to have "*un morceau de Cochonnaille, dans le pot, et un peu de vin dans le petit caveau ;*" but he added, it required great industry to render their vines productive, during a six month's constant cultivation ; and that he had little

* Before the revolution, the peasant, who was not oppressed by feudal tenures, and whoever could save by his earnings from the rapacity of taxation a little sum, raised himself to the dignity of a small proprietor. The pride which this singular and rare independence awakened was so great, that the dying father sometimes divided the proprietorship of a single apple tree among his sons.—On this subject, see *Young's Travels into France*.

† There is no primogeniture in France : all property is now equally divided among the children.

hopes of deriving much profit from this year, on account of the unparalleled humidity of the season. "But what was a bad season," he added, "to the depredation committed by foreign troops?—*Sacré*," and he ground his teeth, "*les coquins de Prussiens*;" they drank up all the wine wherever they found it. We asked him whether, in some respects, the conduct of the Prussians was not a war of reprisals.

"*Comment donc?*" he replied, almost jumping with a sudden fit of passion, which his wife endeavoured to reprove with "*mais quelle vivacité, mon ami!*"

"*Comment donc! une guerre de représailles?*" The Prussians were the first aggressors:—"pourquoi se mêler de nos affaires, dans le temps de la révolution? *sacré!*" "But that is an *affaire finie!* they came as the allies of our king, as our friends; and they plundered, they ravaged, they destroyed. *Allez, monsieur, allez dans la Perche, go to la Perche, to Sevres,* to St. Cloud, hear what husbands and fathers have to say there! Ah, seigneur Dieu! cela fait dresser les cheveux sur la tête! cela fait frémir!*"

I observed, that, as a soldier, he must be aware that such horrors were the natural consequences of war, under whatever colours it was carried on. "*Si fait,*" he replied petulantly, "*pour la guerre ouverte, cela s'entend; mais nos amis, les alliés, madame, voilà notre refrain!*" On this subject it seems, indeed, to be the refrain of the nation.

Oh, in those moments of desolation and carnage, when foreign armies, under the white standard of peace and

* A gentleman, whose estates lie in la Perche, assured me that the peasantry were with difficulty prevented from rising *en masse* against the Prussians.

of the Bourbons, ravaged the fertile plains and vine-covered hills of France;—when the nation saw itself the victim of that force, which approached its frontiers under the guise of amity—was there no royal arm to rush between the sword of the foreigner and the life of the subject? Was there no royal voice to raise its cry of protection, and, like the founder of the Bourbon dynasty, shout along the charging line, “*Sauvez mes Français?*”

There is scarcely any transition more instantaneous than the extremes of choler and good-humour in an irritated Frenchman. The subject of our conversation had thrown all the angry elements of our military proprietor into activity. A few complimentary phrases on the beauty of his little domain, and the probable happiness of his simple and industrious life, brought back all the gaiety, mildness, and urbanity of the French character. He bowed and smiled, and said he had no reason to complain of his lot; that if things would go on as they had done, all would be well. He said he knew us at once to be “*des Anglais, par notre tournure* ;” and added, the English troops had shown great discipline, and behaved with much more moderation, than any other of the foreign armies.

Although he talked with singular intelligence on the actual agricultural state of the canton he inhabited, he was less alive to its literary interests; for of the celebrated Madame de Cottin he had never heard, nor knew any lady “*qui travailla beaucoup*,” (wrote much,) who had ever possessed a chateau in the *Vallée D’Orsai*. We mentioned the circumstance of her unfortunate kinsman and lover having shot himself in the grounds of her chateau, as an event likely to have attracted rustic

attention: "*Eh ! mais mon Dieu, oui !*" replied his wife, "*je me rappelle de cela,*" and she pointed out to us a chateau in the distance, where a gentleman shot himself in consequence of suspecting the attachment of his wife for his own particular friend. For this information she was, I thought, reproved by her husband with a delicacy rather beyond the ordinary tone of rustic feeling: "*Ma femme, c'est inconcevable, tu vas faire courir une histoire comme cela ! une affaire de famille ! si donc, qu'est-ce que ça te regarde ?*"

The wife stood abashed ; and the chateau of the suicide husband not being the chateau we sought, we were obliged to return to our inn in the village, much pleased with having thus accidentally lighted on one of those little proprietors, whose means of subsistence and happy independence lie within the compass of a few roods cultivated by their own hands, and whose condition has arisen out of the fermentation of revolutionary conflict. "Misery," said a French gentleman to me, speaking of the severity of the season, and the depredation of the troops, "misery already attacks us, and presents a prospect of its increase, by the four years' contributions we have yet to pay you;" *mais encore elle n'atteint presque pas l'habitant de campagne, qui est généralement devenu propriétaire.*

* * * * *

When the late Emperor of France returned to his palace of the Bourbon Elysée, immediately after his defeat at Waterloo, he continued many hours without taking any refreshment. One of the grooms of the chamber ventured to serve up some *gelée de bouillon*, and some coffee, in his cabinet, by the hands of a child, a sort of page, whom Napoleon had occasionally distin-

gushed by his notice. The Emperor sat motionless, with his hands spread upon his eyes. The child stood patiently before him, gazing with infantine curiosity on an image, which presented so strong a contrast to his own figure of simplicity and peace; at last the little attendant, presenting his tray, exclaimed, in the familiarity of an age which knows so little distinctions, "*Mangez-en, Sire, cela vous fera du bien.*" The Emperor looked at him, and asked, "*N'es-tu pas de Genessee?*" (a village near Paris.) "*Non, Sire, je suis de Pierre-fite.*" "*Où tes parens ont une chaumière, et quelques arpens de terre.*" "*Oui, Sire.*" "*Voilà le bonheur!*" replied the man who was still, even then, Emperor of the French and King of Italy.*

* * * * *

Turgot, whose profound genius extended to every branch of human knowledge, who, at the head of a ministry, promulgated the principles of a philosopher, and said, "Let mankind be free, and let each country enjoy the peculiar advantages bestowed on her by nature,"—Turgot encouraged agriculture, as the best means of ensuring the prosperity of France; and brought to the aid and developement of his great views all that France then boasted of genius and acquirement. But while it was the glory of the unfortunate Louis XVI. to have raised such a man to the ministry, it was his weakness and his misfortune to have sacrificed him to the intrigues of that self-interested and privileged class, which hurried on alike the ruin of the sovereign and of the state; and the enlarged views of this great man for the agri-

* This little anecdote is copied from a journal, supposed to be written by one of Napoleon's secretaries, called "*Nuits de l'Abdication.*"

cultural prosperity of the land remained unaccomplished. But though France is still considered as far behind England in a science, on which her prosperity peculiarly depends, yet (in the words of a professed farmer and great landed proprietor). "*Le peuple s'est éclairé sur les principes de l'agriculture ; le goût de la campagne s'est ranimé ; et l'activité de l'esprit s'est portée vers les améliorations agricoles.*"

There is in the moving scenery of pastoral life something peculiarly cheering and picturesque ; and though every country must devote itself to those pursuits, which are most adapted to its natural advantages, yet the pastoral country will ever present to the heart of the philanthropist images infinitely more consonant to its feelings, than can be supplied by the details of commerce and manufacture. From the meagre and squallid population which swarm amidst the noxious vapours of the mine, or decay in the confinement of unwholesome manufactories, existing between the extremes of want and intemperance, and alike morally and physically debased, the feelings turn with disgust and commiseration ; while it is impossible not to envy a country whose population is invited, by a bounteous and prodigal soil, to devote its energies to the service of nature, even though that country be less great, less opulent, than our own. It is impossible to travel any distance in France, without being struck with the picturesque scenes which continually present themselves. In the south, and among the heights called "*les petites Alpes,*" between Lyons and Geneva, a family of two or three generations may frequently be seen issuing forth from the cottage of the patriarchal sire, with the first rays of the morning ;—the old dames, to cull the grasses and nutritive herbs for

their cows; the younger ones, to share the labours of the field or vineyard, with their brothers, husbands, or lovers, under the watchful eye of the guardian father; while the boys and girls lead forth their sheep from the nightly fold, and the younger urchins take the reins of government over large flocks of turkeys, and rule the politics of the poultry yard, with well-sustained authority.

In the course of our several little journies from our head-quarters at Paris, we frequently stopped to talk to the shepherds who present themselves by the roadside, to salute travellers as they pass, and whom we found useful to our course through those miserable cross roads, which usually lead to the *gentilhommière*, or chateau, buried deep in some sequestered copse, and accessible only by paths, narrow and difficult as those to heaven.

The modern French shepherd, more characterized by the grotesque than the picturesque, has nothing in his appearance of the "*bergerie sentimentale*," represented in the landscapes of Louis XIVth's day—no crook wreathed with flowers, nor jacket *couleur de rose*; but his large straw hat, which shades out the sun; his stout frieze coat, which preserves him against the cold; his leathern belt, long staff, and scrip, seem all well suited to meet the necessities of his condition; while his little portable habitation, which he wheels about from scite to scite, as the wind blows or the sun shines, and his faithful dog, with the merry, though not very musical tone of his sheep-bells, complete a picture not without its merits, even to the eye of an artist or a poet. Speaking a jargon not always very easily understood, he never fails, when addressed, "*d'avoir l'honneur de vous saluer*," or, "*de souhaiter*," (with a low bow) "*bon voy-*

age à madame et monsieur." Frequently they followed us to repeat their instructions, relative to "*les méchants chemins*" we had to encounter ; and they always exhibited in their manner the kindness of nature, mixed with the courtesy of civilization.

It is a singular circumstance, that the little proprietors of a few *arpens de terre* do not even yet cultivate pasturage for their cows ; and this negligence, this remnant of their ancient bad system of farming, peoples the walks and fields on Sundays and holidays with groups of girls and women, employed in cutting grasses, with which they fill the little baskets hanging on their arms. It is thus a weekly provision is made for the cow, which is but occasionally released from its confinement, and permitted to range the field, under the guidance of a boy or girl leading it by a rope. Every peasant has some little live stock : few are without a cow, and to it are usually added a pig, mule, or ass, according to the circumstances of the proprietor. There are, of course, many among these small farmers and owners of "*petits propriétés*," who have not enough land to find entire occupation for a plough and team ; and an arrangement is often made among a little knot of neighbours, to maintain among them the plough as common property, while each supplies a horse or mule for the general service. Thus the same *attelage* answers the purposes of all. It sometimes, however, happens that among these independent lords of an acre, some are so little favoured by fortune, as to be unable to join even these small and accommodating agricultural firms ; and then the proprietor is seen trailing a sort of ploughing machine, resembling a harrow, over his small territory, with the aid of one poor donkey, the scrub of the farm. Still,

however, this man is an independent proprietor. The little spot of earth he labours is his own : the portion of grain he sows he will reap : his children will eat of the fruit of the tree his hand has planted : and while this modicum of land preserves him and his family in independence, while every particle of the soil is turned to its utmost account, and yields triple produce from what it formerly did, in less interested hands, the frugal savings of laborious industry do not go to feed the rapacity of the tythe-proctor, to meet the vexatious call of rack-rents, or to pay for air and light, the inheritance of the "very commoners of nature." The French peasant has not to encounter any one of the many evils that press upon the neck of the Irish peasantry, and the imposts which rendered unavailing the industry of his fathers, the *corvée*, the *gabelle*, the *taille*, now scare him no longer, even in his dreams. His time, his labour are his own ; and the spot to which he devotes them is a land of promise, to which the light of liberty first directed him.

But beside the vineyard or the field, there is another branch of industry and profit in their rural economy, which engrosses much of their attention, and contributes infinitely to their amusement and gratification—a garden ! Every French peasant has a garden. It is an arrangement both of necessity and of enjoyment, with which they never dispense.

There was a day in France, when flowers seemed only to breath their odours for noble senses, or to expand their beauties to carpet the steps of royalty : the road was strewed with jonquils, over which Louis XIV.

passed on his celebrated visit to Chantilly;* and Madame de Montespan hid out the unseemly earth, which nourished her orange groves at her "*Armida palace*" of Clugny, with the rarest plants. The finest flowers in France are now to be found in the peasants' gardens—the native *rose de Provence*, the stranger rose of India, entwine their blossoms and grow together amidst the rich foliage of the vine, which scales the gable, and creeps along the roof of the cottage. I have seen a French peasant as proud of his tulips, as any stockjobber-florist of Amsterdam; and heard him talk of his carnations, as if he had been the sole possessor of the "*semper augustus*." Oh! when shall I behold, near the peasant's hovel in my own country, other flowers than the bearded thistle, which there waves its "lonely head," and scatters its down upon every passing blast; or the scentless shamrock, the unprofitable blossom of the soil, which creeps to be trodden upon, and is gathered only to be plunged in the inebriating draught, commemorating annually the fatal illusions of the people, and drowning in the same tide of madness their emblems and their wrongs.†

Flowers are not only a luxury to the French peasant: they are a commodity of profit: they supply the markets of all the towns in France: and every British traveller is aware what a profusion of violets and lilies of the valley are obtained for a few sous at every vil-

* Le roi y doit aller le 24me. de ce mois; il y sera un jour entier—jamais il ne s'est fait tant de dépense au triomphe des empereurs, qu'il y en aura là. Il y aura pour mille écus de jonquilles. Jugez à proportion.

Lettres de Sevigné, vol. i

† It is an annual custom in Ireland to drown the shamrock in whisky, on St. Patrick's-day, a festival commemorated by every species of barbarous revelry.

lage; and what pretty *bouquets* are tossed into the carriage windows, as it rolls rapidly on, at the risk of not being paid for, while the little priestesses of Flora offer their gratuitous prayer of "*bon voyage*." Flowers, indeed, seem an universal passion of the nation; and the pretty village of *Fontenay-aux-roses* derives its name from its abundant produce of "the queen of flowers," and from its ancient privilege of furnishing roses to the court and the parliament; for under the old regime, in the month of May, "*en plein parlement*," each peer and magistrate received in his turn a *bouquet* of roses. But "*Fontenay aux-roses*" possesses a celebrity beyond what its flowers bestow. It was here, in the pretty *maison de plaisance* of Mr. S——, that the illustrious and unfortunate Condorcet took shelter a short time before his death. Fearing, however, to risk the safety of his friend, the unhappy victim of a sanguinary democracy again commenced his perilous wanderings; was observed, seized, swallowed poison, and died in a ditch,* on the road which leads from Fontenay to Paris.

Notwithstanding the quantity of vegetables raised in the *verger*, the consumption of this article is so considerable in every family, that the good dame who loads her mule or ass with panniers of cheese or butter for the market, generally brings them back filled with "*des*

* Having wandered for a considerable time in the woods, the exhaustion of hunger and fatigue urged him to seek refreshment in a little *cabaret*, by the road side. Forgetful of his disguise, and assumed character of a livery servant, while his omelette was in preparation, he took from his pocket an Horace, and began to read. This circumstance exciting suspicion, he was immediately arrested. Condorcet, as Voltaire has testified, was a man of the highest powers: and the purity of his views and the elevation of his character are still attested by all that is liberal in France.

legumes" for the table. Another source of industry and profit to the peasantry is the bee-hive. Honey is much used in France: and this branch of rural economy is cultivated to a great extent; and in the *Orleanois*, with a peculiar ingenuity worth recording. When "the flowers hang down their heads to die," and their honied essence has been completely rifled by these little *brigands* of nature, the hive is carefully wrapped up in linen cloths, and the whole busy state is thus transported to the confines of the noble forest of Orleans, where the morning sun, and the luxuriant blossoms of the wild heath, peculiarly fine in that district, open a new source of *ways and means* to some noisy, bustling, little Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, having run through the whole string of usual expediency, avails himself of the *supplies*, which others have accidentally presented, and prides himself on results, for which he had made no provision. On the banks of the Loire also, this transplantation of old dynasties into the refreshing regions of new realms, is frequently effected with great success, by a similar process.

The condition of almost every peasant permitting him to carry on a little pastoral commerce with the great town of his commune, from some one branch or other of his rural economy, there are few scenes more cheering or animated than that presented along the noble roads that lead to the great towns, on a market day. Such a scene I witnessed on an early spring morning, in passing between the little village of Samer (where we had slept, and which we found garrisoned with British troops) to Montreuil, to which the sentimental topo-

graphy of Sterne has given a distinction far beyond what he himself ascribes to it, in the map of France.*

A champaign country is always favourable to pastoral groupings: that before us was such as Gainsborough would have selected for one of his charming landscapes. The silvery hue of the atmosphere, which characterizes the morning light of an early spring day, harmonized with the light handling of the trees just bursting into foliage, and among the rural multitude which moved along the road towards the same point, there were many forms marked by that elegant rusticity and historic character, attributed to the figures of Poussin, and which gave his landscapes much interest; while the strength and grotesque rudeness of others presented the humorous originals of the Flemish school in all their breadth and coarseness. Boys and girls, with that graceful lightness and flexibility of figure and motion peculiar to the French youth, skipped along the road side; others carefully led on the mule or ass, on which their grandmother, poised between her panniers, displayed all the finery of her "*habit de fête*." The old men, with long staffs and immense cocked hats, walked stoutly on, and led or drove the teams, carts, and wagons, which filled the road on every side. All was sound, and motion, and bustle, and business; and the bells fastened to the showy worsted head-pieces of the mules and horses kept merry time to the whole animated scene; while baskets of violets and lily of the valley, on their way to the market of Montreuil, perfumed the air with all the odour of a full-blown summer.

* "There's not a town in all France, which, in my opinion, looks better in the map than Montreuil," &c.—*Tristram Shandy*, vol. iii.

I know not what motive, for it certainly could not be compassion, had induced the sturdy driver of one of the many open *charettes*, which for a time kept pace with our carriage, to admit into his rustic vehicle, along with his dame and demoiselles, two or three British soldiers; but the combination and contrast of this group was admirable. The military uniform, the military air, the English physiognomy, with a certain mechanical immobility of the well-drilled countenances (which had so long obeyed the command of "Eyes right," and "Eyes left," that every feature had been disciplined by beat of drum,) presented the strongest contrast to the figures and faces of their companions; whose ever-shifting expression almost distorted intelligence to grimace, and whose violence of gesture received relief from the automaton-movements of their military companions. A cold, solemn-looking English sergeant was giving a sort of lethargized attention (while he smoked a long German pipe) to the details which the elder dame was communicating, unconscious, perhaps, that he did not understand a word she uttered: while a spruce Irish corporal, who assured us, when we spoke to him at the barrier of Montreuil, that he felt, "*quite agreeable in France*," was endeavouring to make himself so to a round-faced-black-eyed little demoiselle, who sat beside him, and who was running over the little coquetteries, in a language which nature has rendered a mother-tongue all the world over; a tongue which Pat, whatever may have been his deficiency in the language of the country, seemed perfectly to understand.

In this singular and intimate association of the natives of two countries, so long opposed by

"Contumelious, beastly, mad-brain'd war,"

there was something extremely gracious to the feelings ; and the horrible and sanguinary details which filled up the interval from the moment the British troops first entered France, were all forgotten in the contemplation of this little scene of reciprocal good-will. The English soldier no longer tracked his progress with blood, nor carried desolation to the hearth of the French peasant : the French peasant no longer fled in fear : nor execrated in indignation the "armipotent soldier" of a rival country. ~~Oh, why~~ Why should nations, so closely associated by natural position, be ever opposed in sanguinary conflict ; and, assisting the wild ambition of their rulers, discover too late that they are but the dupes of their own national prejudice, the victims of a policy which works on them for its own views !

I fear, however, that this little scene was rather a rare than a just sample of the intercourse and confidence, which subsist between the peasant class of France and their allied conquerors. Whatever public spirit is to be found in France, must not be sought for in her capital, but in her provinces ; and a peasantry whose substance is hourly drained by contributions and taxation, cannot be expected to look with much confidence and good-will on those, who have been the cause of these multiplied evils.

A few miles from Montreuil our postillion stopped his horses, and turning back his head, asked, with a grin of intreaty, "*Monsieur, permettra-t-il à Madame de monter derrière la voiture ?*" and he pointed to a smart girl, who had run panting beside our *calèche* for some paces. Madame thanked us with a low curtsey for our *pardon*.

sion, and thanked us again when she alighted at the barrier of Montreuil. We entered into conversation, while the *commissaire* was looking at our passport. She was an inhabitant of Samer. I asked her whether the English troops did not make her little town very gay ? "*bien le contraire*," she answered, with a significant shake of her head ; "*c'est d'une tristesse à faire mourir* ;" for there were no "*bals bourgeois*." I enquired the reason. "*Oh, par exemple, les honnêtes filles n'aiment pas se présenter devant les militaires étrangers*." For this piece of village prudery, however, she would assign no reason but "*eh ! mais, que voulez-vous ?*" and those broken interjections and accompanying shrugs of the shoulders, which in France mean every thing, or nothing, just as they are taken.

* * * * *

When Arthur Young travelled through France, in 1789, he observed that not only cottages, but well-built houses, were without glass windows, and had no other light than what the door admitted. This true model of an Irish cabin would now, I believe, scarcely be found in any part of France, not even in the north, where the peasantry are in a less prosperous condition than elsewhere. There is, in the whole appearance of an excellent English cottage, an air of indescribable comfort, a sort of picturesque neatness that goes beyond the line of mere cleanliness and accommodation, and which speaks as much to the eye of taste, as to the feelings of philanthropy. To this character the French habitations, as far as my observation extends, do not attain ; although I heard much of the flat-roofed cottages of Quercy, and of the exterior neatness and interior comfort of the peasant residence in the south. The nearest approach to

English comfort, which we saw, was in Normandy, where the compact buildings, composed of brick, interspersed with transverse beams painted black, and deeply buried in their "*bouquet d'arbres*," or knots of fruit and forest trees, strongly resemble the farming tenements of Staffordshire and Shropshire.

The modern French cottages, however, are strong, and well built; and are covered with a thatch peculiarly excellent, and perfectly adapted to render their lofts warm, and to repel the inclemency of their severe winters. Their chimnies are well constructed, their windows neatly sashed, and their doors well hung: the latter, I observed, were generally kept shut. The floor is almost universally of clay, beaten down to the consistency of stone. In the "*grande chambre*," or interior room, on which the prosperous owner displays his refinement and taste, there is occasionally to be found a *plancher*, or boarded floor. The ordinary cottage is, for the most part, divided into two apartments: the common room, which serves as kitchen, and a better apartment, in which the best bed and best furniture are placed. The lofts afford good sleeping rooms for the servants and younger part of the family. Every cottage has its little *basse-cour*, its piggery, and cow-shed; and too many exhibit their high estimation of a good *fumier*, by accumulating the manure, which is to enrich their little *demesne*, nearly opposite to their doors.

One of the first objects with a French peasant, when he becomes master of a cottage, is to furnish it with an excellent bed. This luxury is carried to such an excess, that in many provinces, and in the west particularly, they ascend their beds by steps. Not to have a lofty bed is a sign of poverty, both in taste and in circum-

stances, which all are anxious to avoid ; and to meet the "*qu'en dira-t-on ?*" of the *commune*, on this subject, the sumptuousness of this piece of furniture is procured at the expense of other comforts, or sometimes even of necessities. In this article, at least, the peasantry are wonderfully improved, since the "*beau siècle* of Louis XIV." that golden age, which all, "*royalistes purs*" wish to see restored. In the best æra of that prosperous reign, when Madame de Sevigné arrived at an inn, kept by a peasant, near the town of Nantes, she found only straw to lie on ; and she describes it as a place "*plus pauvre, plus misérable qu'on ne peut le représenter ; nous n'y avons trouvé que de la paille fraîche, sur quoi nous avons tous couché sans nous déshabiller ;*" and this was in the most splendid reign that France ever witnessed ; and this was in the very provinces, in which the peasant is now such a coxcomb, that he ascends his bed by steps.

I have frequently reckoned three or four beds under the same roof, generally placed in a little recess in the wall, and hung with faded tapestry, or curtains of tarnished damask, the second-hand finery of some *fripier* of the nearest great town, whose stores are even still but too well supplied from the spoils of revolutionary depredation.

Whatever spiritual grace may exist in the family of a French peasant, will be found exhibited in "*the outward and visible signs,*" which decorate the bed's head. *There* hangs the *bénitier*, with its holy water, a sort of domestic altar. *There* too is frequently suspended some thrice-blessed relic, which, though it may have lost much of its miraculous efficacy, preserves its station ; there also a maimed virgin, or headless saint, which in-

fidelity has neglected, or time dismembered, still remains at least for ornament, if not for use. I have frequently observed, that the bed of *Javotte*, under her straw roof, and the bed of the *petite matresse* of Paris, were precisely on the same model, each exhibiting her stock of vanity and superstition, in an article the least calculated for the display of either.

The *pendule*, or time-piece, which nearly excited an insurrection in *la Bretagne*, when introduced into that barassed province, in the days of Louis XIV. (as being some portentous engine of the *gabelle*), is now not only an ornament, but an indispensable piece of furniture, and is to be found in every better sort of cottage. Those, so much in use among the peasantry of the south, are fabricated in the Jura, or the Vosge, and are purchased at a very moderate price. To count time by its artificial divisions, is the resource of inanity. The unoccupied ignorance of the very lowly, and the inevitable *ennui* of the very elevated, alike find their account in consultations with a time-piece. It is in the hour-glass of energy and of occupation, that the sand is always found lying neglected at the bottom.

One of our most liberal and most recent English travellers in France, Mr. Berkbeck, describes in his brief journal a French peasant, eating with a silver fork; and I observed that we never stopped even at the poorest *hôtellerie*, on the cross roads, or in the smallest village (which we frequently did, as much to talk to the host as to obtain refreshment), that we had not our fruit and *fromage de cochon* served with massy silver forks and spoons. Indeed, with those few exceptions, which must be every where found to arise out of the peculiar circumstances of individual misfortune, the French cottage al-

ways indicates the dwelling of a thriving and prosperous population.

.....

I have often heard it remarked by English travellers, who had visited France before the revolution, that the peasantry were, at that period, as dishonest as they were necessitous, and yielded to temptations of theft the more readily, as the severity of the punishment universally prevented prosecution. This branch of morals, which depends so much more upon the condition of those who violate or respect it, than upon any abstract principle, is necessarily improved in France with the amended state of the lower classes. Morals are inevitably bettered by the competency which excludes temptation; and property, universally if not equally diffused, begets a respect for property, seconded by that law of self-preservation, which imposes the necessity of "doing as we would be done by." In this respect I have heard it allowed, even by the most exaggerated royalists, that the lower classes in France are infinitely improved, both in the towns and country: and the rarity of executions in France for crimes of dishonesty, forms a singular contrast to their melancholy frequency in England. I remember our having alighted from our carriage to spare its springs in a sort of "crack-skull-common road," that wound through a wilderness of fruit-trees, which might have passed for the original Eden, and which presented such temptations to the lips of the traveller, as she, "who for an apple damned mankind," would have found irresistible. I asked a boy, who with a little comrade was lying reading under one of these prolific trees, whether I might take an apple: he replied coolly, "*cela ne me regarde pas*;"—they are not

mine." "But you sometimes help yourself, I dare say." He raised his head, and looking at me with an expression of humorous sarcasm, he replied, "*Vous voulez dire, VOUS: n'est-ce pas, Madame? Non, Madame, il vaut mieux en demander, que de se faire voleur, pour une poignée.*" I know not whether this little anecdote be any illustration of the rustic morals of the country; but I saw nothing, during my residence in France, that could induce me to consider it as a rare or splendid instance of probity. A more remarkable instance, in point with the present subject, occurred to an Irish friend. He was leaving Paris during the reign of terror, and dropped down the Seine in a small boat, which just contained himself and his baggage. Within a mile of the town he was hailed by a *bon citoyen*, who mistook him for a "*député, qui s'étoit évadé avec de l'or de la république,*" and was forced to land. After it had been determined by the mob that it would not be right to kill him without examination, he was dragged away to the *mairie de commune*, where he was detained nearly an hour, before he could show his passports, and be admitted to proceed. Yet on his return to his boat, he found his gold-headed cane, silver sauce-pan, baggage, every thing in short, *in statu quo*, without injury, and without violation. Even then the lower classes began to feel they had a character to support, and guilty of crime, they already disdained the vices of slaves.

Sobriety is a constitutional virtue with the French; and drunkenness a vice strictly confined to the very refuse of the very lowest orders, which always infest great and populous cities.* I remember asking an old female

* The military, however, drink freely.

peasant in Picardy, whether *les bonnes mères du village* were ever guilty of this failing? She replied with indignation:—" *Dame! elles seroient chastes de notre commune.*"

The thin light *vin du pays* is the table-drink of the poorest peasantry; and there are few so poor, as not to have a little store of superior quality in the *petit caveau*, or cellar, to celebrate the many "*festins*," which enjoyment steals from labour, under the sanctified terms of epochs and commemorations.

To estimate the virtue of temperance, in the lower classes of any nation, it is necessary, perhaps, to have lived in a country so conditioned, that drunkenness becomes almost a venial resource against inevitable misery—where the policy, by which the land is ruled, exhibits such a complete tissue of error, both in its legislation and administration, that much of its power is derived from the perpetuation of a vice, which keeps the people degraded, and at the same time pours money into the exchequer.

.....

The modes of every-day life in France, even among the peasantry and lowest classes, are powerfully influenced by the happy and genial temperament of the people. And though the peasantry are not without a certain *brusquerie* of manner, arising out of their condition, it is tempered by a courtesy, which indicates an intuitive urbanity, beyond the reach of art to teach, or the means of cunning to acquire; and it explains what Cæsar meant, when he declared, he found the Gauls "*the politest barbarians he had conquered.*" There is, however, among the peasantry of the present day, as among all

the lower classes, a certain tone of independence,* which almost seems to claim equality with the superior person they address, and which is evidently tinged with the republican hue, so universally adopted during the revolution. A French peasant, meeting his brother peasant, takes off his hat, with the air of a *petit-maitre*; and I have seen two labourers argue the ceremonies of their bare-headed salutation, with as many stipulations as would go to a treaty of peace.

"*Mais monsieur mon ami, comrrouous, je vous en prie.*"—" *Eh, mais vous, monsieur, parbleu! si vous l'ordonnez, là.*"—And both, with a bow and a scrape, after a few more compliments, resume their hats and their conversation together. Equally polite to his superior, but not less independent in his manner than when addressing his equal, "*l'homme du peuple*" now looks "*l'homme comme il faut*" full in the face, when he addresses him; and there is indeed a mixture of intelligence and frankness in his manner, extremely pleasant to witness, and at once foreign from familiarity and meanness. Oh! In listening to their sensible questions, and frank replies, how often, and how unavoidably, have I contrasted their deportment with that of the peasantry of my own country, where a whole population seem condemned to exhibit, in their unregulated conduct and manners, the extremes of lawless resistance, and of groveling servility;—where he, who for some trifling benefit to-day kneels in the dust at your feet, in exaggerated gratitude, with "*long may you reign! may*

* When Napoleon, in one of his harangues to the people, addressed the peasantry by the term "*payans*," it gave general umbrage, as if the same term had been given to the peasantry of England. He accordingly took care not to repeat it.

you have a happy death." (for power and death are familiar images to the Irish mind) will, perhaps, to-morrow, in the midnight meetings of his wretched hovel, in the desperation of poverty and inebriety, plan the violation of your property, or the destruction of your life. Slave of his passions, and victim of his wrongs; in good or ill, equally governed by their tyranny, he reacts upon the policy which made him what he is, with a faithful, but frightful influence.

* * * * *

The domestic manners of the French peasantry, like their domestic affections, are mild and warm; and the possessive pronoun, which denotes the strong binding interest of property in the object to which it is attached, is profusely given to all the endearing ties of kindred. "*Notre mari*," or more frequently "*notre maître*," is the term which the wife uses, when speaking of or to her husband; and the adjectives of "*bon*," or "*petit*,"* are generally attached to every member of the family, according to their rank, or age. The grandsire is always "*le bon papa*," and all sisters and brothers are "*petits*" and "*petit*."

During my most pleasant residence at the Chateau D'Orsonville, I remember one morning accompanying Mad. de C—— in a walk into the village, to visit an ancient vigneron, who had, in his youth, been a gardener in the family, and who was now a sort of little *propriétaire*, cultivating his own *petite terre*, and supporting a family of three generations, by its produce.

* These family endearments are the same among the first as among the lower classes, and the diminutive "*petite*" is given to the daughter or sister of a duke, as in the family of a peasant.

The cottage of this little landholder was inclosed within a low mud wall, immediately opposite to it; and within the same court was the smaller cottage of his son's family. A flower knot, in which we found the old man working, although it was Sunday, was the ornament of both. "*Bon jour, père Marin,*" said Madame de C——, as we entered the wicket gate. "*Bon jour, mademoiselle,*" returned père Marin, throwing aside his spade, and approaching us with a low bow, not ungracefully performed for a man of years. "*Et, la bonne femme?*" asked Madame de C——.

"*La voilà, notre femme,*" replied père Marin, pointing to the cottage—" *Elle apprend à notre petit bon homme à prier le bon Dieu;*" and, in fact, we found *notre petit bon homme*, a fine boy of four years old, on his knees before his ancient grandmother. She arose at our entrance, and replacing her missal and beads on a shelf, which contained some gardeners' calendars, and an old volume of Bossuet, welcomed us with great courtesy. Madame de C—— enquired for all the members of her family (and she asked for each by their name): the old woman replied, "*pour notre fils, il est allé s'égarer au jeu de bague, au château—et notre bru, elle est auprès du berceau de notre petite, petite; et pour le petit bon homme, le voilà, le voilà, le magot!*"

Madame de Chabanais asked "*le magot,*" whether he would accompany her back to the château—" *Mais très volontiers,*" he replied, and nodding to his grandfather and grandmother, he added, "*adieu, notre bon papa; adieu, notre bonne maman; adieu, maman,*" to his young mother, who was seated at the door of her cottage, rocking the cradle of an infant child, and engaged in making a shirt for her husband.

The peasantry submit with difficulty to the *amendement* of idleness, imposed on them by the new regulations, which enforce the strict observance of the sabbath—an observance unknown in most Catholic countries.

Before I take leave of the family of *notre bon père Marin*, I must notice an incident, which struck me forcibly. The book-shelf of the grandfather was filled with books of devotion and agriculture. The books on the shelves, in the son's cottage, (which were pretty numerous) consisted of some odd volumes of Voltaire, Molière, Rousseau, and la Bruyère. I asked the young woman, whether her husband read much? She said, always when he had time. After we had walked in *père Marin's* garden, which was large and well stocked, he hobbled after me with some fine carnations, apologizing that his grapes were not ripe. I have preserved these flowers; for I know no specimen in the hortus siccus of Linnæus more precious, than the flowers gathered from among the cabbages of a peasant's garden.

I observed in the cottage, of *le père Marin*, as indeed I did wherever I had an opportunity of conversing with the French peasantry, a primitive simplicity of manners united to natural quickness and evident tendency to a sort of quaint humour. In Auvergne, la Bretagne, and the Bearnois, I am told this is particularly observable; and that among these truly pastoral people the subject of many modern idylliums may be found, not less touching or less *naïve* than the ancient. Nor, indeed, are the Theocriti and Sannazaris of the *Théâtres des Vaudevilles, et de la Variété*, unfaithful to their ori-

gimels; though, perhaps, they do not always take the most poetical view of their subjects.

The *tu-toyer* has no equivalent in the primitive *thee* and *thou* of the English translation. The *tu-toyer* universal in France, in all the intercourse of friendship and intimacy, is always used among the peasants, except to their superiors, to whom, during the revolution, it was also applied in the then reigning grammar of French equality. "*Ici on se tu-toit*" was frequently seen written over the doors of the public *bureaux*. Perhaps it was a remains of the rustic education, received by the royal mountaineer, Henry IV. which made him not only *tu-toyer* his wife, as he called his queen, but his ministers of state—

"Je bois à toi, Sully,
Mais j'ai failli :
Je devois dire à vous, adorable duchesse !
Pour boire à vos appas,
Faut mettre chapeau bas."

By this little *chanson à boire*, the *tu* and *toi* were even then evidently deemed vulgarisms, which offended the pride of the haughty Duchesse de Sully, whom the royal poet dignifies with the stately pronoun "*vous*." I have heard Napoleon's *roturier* origin quoted by the *royalistes purs*, as explaining the vulgar circumstance of his using the "*tu-toyer*" to the daughter of the Cæsars, who, however, was so little hurt by the coarse familiarity, as to call the Emperor of the French and King of Italy, in return, "*mon petit raton !*"

All the ties of kindred are peculiarly sacred among the French peasantry; and parental feelings are so strong as to have given rise to a custom, which, however

touching, in a pastoral tale, would perhaps, in real life, be more "honoured in the breach than the observance."

When the aged parent beholds the prospects of life closing dimly on his view, he endeavours to catch one parting ray from its sinking sun, by an act, which rallies all the best feelings of humanity to the heart. He gives up his all to his children; and throws himself on their generosity and gratitude for future comfort, maintenance, and support. He thus affords them the opportunity of repaying the cares he lavished on their helpless state, by consigning his feebleness to their protection: and as he is led from the cottage of one child to that of another, his arrival and departure awaken all that yet remains vital at the heart of the old sire, and renew emotions, which usually slumber or die in the independent selfishness, by which the egotism of age excludes itself from gratuitous kindness.

This imprudent, but benevolent, custom of an affectionate and primitive people (for the French peasants are extremely *primitive*,) is sometimes, though very rarely, a test of human virtue too much for the proof, and evinces in the father's wrongs "how much sharper than a serpent's tooth is an ungrateful child." The destitute and ill-requited parent may sometimes appeal to the friend's protection, or the stranger's sympathy, and cry, in the affecting words of Lear: "*I gave them all.*" It is delightful, however, to believe, what I was constantly assured, that such instances of turpitude are very rare; and that splendid examples of filial devotion and filial gratitude are of every-day occurrence. A peasant father, who had thus generously, but incautiously, distributed his little property, during his life-time, among his children, was met by a neighbour, as he was return-

ing from his first visit to the house of his son—"Eh; comment vous ont-ils reçu?" asked his friend. "*Comme leur enfant!*" was the touching reply.

Oh! blessed be the roof which shelters the aged parent's head from the last rough shocks of time and of adversity!—beneath whose shed love repays all that love bestowed!—where the cradle of reposing age is gently rocked by filial hands; and where the last look of life falls on objects, which render even its last moments precious!

In this act of confidence and generosity, the servants of the family are never forgotten. And they, in return, when they die childless, bequeath their savings to some of the children of the family, with whom they acquired it. The tie between the servant and master, in the peasant regime, is also cemented by some of the kindest feelings, of which human nature is susceptible.

Among the Protestants of Saintonge, the favourite domestic is chosen to answer for *l'enfant de la famille*, at the baptismal font; and this religious alliance inspires the most devoted attachment, on the part of the servant, to the young master. Still, however, the farmer who marries the "*domestique*," as the female servant is called in the rustic *ménage*, is lost for ever to all respectability in his *commune*. This aristocratic horror of a *més-alliance*, so strange in a primitive peasantry, doubtless has its origin in some old prejudice, which has escaped beyond the records of traditionary lore.

There is, among the lower classes of the French, a species of native humour, which, quaint and simple, occasionally furnishes little comic scenes of an almost dramatic effect, in their daily intercourse. I remember seeing an old *voiturier* indulging his humorous disposi-

tion, at the expense of the solemnity of the *commissaire* of the *barrière St. Denis*, with an accompanying grimace and posture quite indescribable. He was driving his little vehicle carelessly along, singing to a group of peasant girls, whom he was conveying to Paris,

“ Qui veut savoir l’histoire entière
De Mam’selle Manon, la couturière.”

“ *Votre passe-port,*”—demanded the *commissaire*,—a tall, stately-looking military man, with only one leg. The old *voiturier* looked him full in the face; then recommencing “ *qui veut savoir, &c. &c.,*” was driving on, when the *commissaire*, furious at this want of respect to the dignity of his office, seized the reins of the sorry horse, with a volley of imprecations, terminating his anathemas with “ *votre passe-port, ou vous n’y passerez pas.*” “ *Comment, diable, je n’y passerai pas ?*” repeated the *voiturier*, starting from his seat in a passion; “ *un passe-port pour mes quatre pucelles !*” pointing to the girls, “ *faut-il faire péage pour des denrées telles que celà ? Vaut-on octroyer les pucelles ? Diable emporte l’âme de mon chien, si j’en comprende un mot, moi !—tenez, monsieur !—que voulez-vous faire avec ces quatre pucelles ?*” The rage and impatience of the *commissaire* was now at its height, when the old *voiturier*, having indulged his humour, showed his passport, and coolly taking up his song of “ *Mam’selle Manon, la couturière,*” drove on.

* * * * *

An elegant and modern biographer of Madame de Maintenon* observes, that in the “ *beau siècle*” of Louis XIV. “ *les esprits étoient soumis à la religion, comme au*

* Madame Suard.

monarque." And Madame de Maintenon herself declares, that some of the gay young men of the most tiresome court in Europe were, "*pleins de grandes impiétés, et de sentimens d'ingratitude, envers le roi.*" While it was thus the fashion of that pious day, to confound the sovereign and the Deity, and to consider the king both as the "law and the prophets," in the purlieus of his own court,* the peasantry, removed from the immediate presence of this human divinity, had but very loose ideas of a religion which was taught by priests, who, Madame Maintenon declares, in one of her confidential letters, "knew no more than themselves," adding—"ils ne songent qu'à parer leurs églises; ceux qui sont plus éclairés, songent à bien prêcher; et leurs brebis ignorent tout."

To this testimony of the state of religion, among the Catholic peasantry of France, given by the exterminator of the Protestants, it is curious to add an anecdote of the dark ignorance of the peasantry of La Bretagne, on subjects of religious importance and carelessly related by one, who cites it as a trait of humour, rather to be laugh-

* "Dieu m'a fait la grace, madame, (says the feeble Racine to Mad. de Maintenon,) en quelle compagnie que je me sois trouvé, de ne jamais rougir de l'évangile, ni du roi." And yet this divinity died, alike hated and despised, left almost alone for three days on his death-bed, abandoned by his wife and his confessor.—His death was celebrated by rejoicings, which reached from the capital to the place of sepulture; and the remains of Louis the Great were carried through *bye-ways* to their long home, to avoid the indignation of a people, from whom he had only extorted blood and tears, and who, long opposing itself to the adulation of a corrupt court, had already changed the epithet of "*le grand*" into that of "*mauvais roi.*"

Racine, who associates the king and the gospel so intimately, in his familiar letters, in his work on the Porte Royal, talks of the great designs of God on *la mère Agnès*. Such was the intellectual *calibre* of the author of *Phédra*.

ed at, than to be deplored; and whose evidence upon all cotemporary subjects may be fairly admitted.

"*Pour La Mousse,*" (says Mad. de Sevigné, speaking of the abbé of that name,) "*Il fait des catéchismes, les fêtes et dimanches. L'autre jour il interrogeoit les petits enfans, et après plusieurs questions, ils confondirent le tout ensemble; de sorte que, venant à leur demander, qui étoit LA VIERGE, ils répondirent tous, l'un après l'autre, que c'étoit le CREATEUR DU CIEL ET DE LA TERRE! Il ne fut point ébranlé, par les petits enfans; mais voyant que des hommes et des femmes, et même des viellards, disoient la même chose, il fut persuadé, et se rendit à l'opinion commune!*"

If, therefore, in the latter days of Louis XIV. when religion under the king and Madame de Maintenou had become a *fashion* among all classes, cotemporary writers assert that the peasantry in the provinces, old and young, believed God *the* Creator, and the *Virgin Mary*, to be one and the same person, it may be presumed that the cause of faith was not much bettered, under the reigns of the infidel* regent, and his profligate ward. It may also be inferred, that the Cardinals du Bois la Farris, de Tencins, and de Fleuris, those Mascarilles of church and state, who governed both by such tricks and subtleties, as were worthy only of the valets and buffos of the vicious Italian drama,† did not, by their example and conduct, enlighten the doctrine or improve the lives of the subaltern clergy, over whom they ruled.

* The devout Mad. de Parabère endeavoured to court the regent's favour, by affecting infidelity. "*Tu a beau faire,*" said the regent, smiling, "*tu seras sauvée.*"

† See the *Mémoires Secrets* of the reign of Louis XV.

It is the fashion to declaim, however, against the *decline* of religion in France, in the present day, and, comparing it to its former state under the old regime, to lament it has so little influence over the peasantry, and lower orders. But what *was* the religion, whose "*decline*" is thus lamented? What was its influence on a people, buried in the grossest superstition and darkest ignorance? While it permitted its ministers to mingle in the intrigues, and foment the disunions of all the courts in Europe, and to countenance the vices of the most licentious of its courts:—while it induced the King of France to compromise matters with his conscience, by sending away his mistresses in Lent, and by taking them back at Easter!!!* and enabled him to quiet his death-bed fears, by laying his enormities on the shoulders of his confessor;† lending its sanction to any vice rich

* Between the exhortations of her confessor, and those of Mad. de Maintenon, Mad. de Montespan was induced to quit the king in the *semaine sainte*. Bossuet also preached to the king the necessity of giving up his mistress, but the "*semaine sainte*" being over, Bossuet and Mad. de Maintenon, who had other views for the royal penitent, beheld with mortification the return of the mistress to Versailles, "*plus triomphante et plus éclatante de beauté, qu'on ne l'avoit jamais vue.*" It was, however, the queen who prevailed upon the fair penitent to return to Versailles, and it was the minister of state Louvois, who, says Mad. de Maintenon, "*à ménagé une tête-à-tête.*" What a combination, and what a picture!

† The ferocious confessor of Louis XIV. the jesuit Le Tellier, the persecutor of all that was good and illustrious in that day, and who united in his views and intrigues the Pope and the King of France, stood beside the bed of the dying king, who said to him, "*Je vous rends responsable devant Dieu, mon père, de toutes les violences que vous m'avez ordonnées.*"—Quere. Did he accept the responsibility?—See Mad. de Maintenon's *Life*, &c. &c.

enough to purchase its indulgences,* and forwarding any views that promised to repay the compliance of its ministers, was its influence to be commended, and its corruptions passed over.

When the events of the revolution took their re-action upon all the errors of the state, which they overturned, it was natural for the disciples of ignorance and superstition to deny principles, when they lost sight of forms; and it belonged to the immediate descendants of those, who declared *God and the Virgin to be one and the same person*, to pronounce in their impious folly, that there was *no God*, to-day, and to *vote him into existence*; to-morrow. For impiety thus daring and extravagant, was the natural re-action of superstition thus dark and ludicrous.

Amidst all the absurdities, however, which during the revolution attended the temporary abolition of catholicism, it is most certain that it then received a shock, which in France can never, and will never be repaired. Among the peasant class, this shock has been more or less resisted, according to the force on which it had to act.

* It was the confessor of Mad. de Maintenon, who quieted her scruples about living with the king's mistresses, receiving the addresses of a married man, and assisting at the orgies, which went under the name of *media nocte*. "*Il falloit que Dieu (says Mad. de Maintenon) eût donné des grandes lumières à l'Abbé Goblin, pour qu'il prît sur lui de décider, avec toute l'autorité d'un apôtre, que je devois rester à la cour. J'exposai tout à ce saint homme, qui persista à m'ordonner d'y demeurer.*"

The immorality of all this is nothing to the odious and canting hypocrisy of the shrewd and strong-minded woman, who never could have believed that *God inspired* her confessor with the force of an apostle, to order her to join the midnight revels of the king, which assembled all that was most profligate and parasitical in his court. It was this permission to assist at these suppers, that M. de Maintenon asked, when she said, "*j'exposai tout,*" &c. &c.

In the *west* it was remotely felt. In la *Vendée*, where the three thousand nuns and priests, in their pontificals, had been seen in the rear of the royal army, raising the crucifix with the bayonet, and lighting the torch of civil contention, at the lamp of faith, catholicism still finds her altars unimpaired. In many parts of the *south*, a simple, and primitive people, who have always substituted *habits* for *principles*, and presented a rich soil to fanaticism in the ardour of temperament, still cling to the religion, and superstition of their fathers. After the abolition of the priesthood, and when in these provinces there were no ministers to officiate, the peasantry were seen assembling in the dilapidated churches, and chanted the office, and celebrated the mass, with as much faith and unction, as if they had been paid for their services, or looked to being rewarded with the produce of the *dîme*. It is however a singular fact, universally known, that while they thus devoutly clung to the *cross*, they professed abhorrence to its *ministers*, and dreaded the return of the *curés* or *vicars*, who long before the revolution had forfeited all claim to their respect, by the undisguised profligacy of their lives, and had rendered themselves eminently obnoxious by their increasing exactions, under the sanction of the *dîme*.

“As long as I can remember,”—said a gentleman to me in Paris, who was a native of the south of France,—“as long as I can remember, *enfant de prêtre* was a term of reprobation among us, given only to the most abject and degraded.” In the midland provinces, in the north, and north-east of the kingdom, the catholic religion still retains its forms; and its rites, now severely enforced, are duly performed, though, generally speaking, coldly and partially attended to, while the increase

of the priesthood, both in number and influence, is universally looked on with fear and horror.

The public mind in France has made a bold and vigorous spring, in proportion to the tension, which had so long restrained its force : and even the peasantry, generally speaking, are as averse to fanaticism, and as alive to the absurdities of popular superstition, as the most enlightened class of yeomanry in England, while it is obvious to all who converse with them on such topics, that they are infinitely more tolerant. They demand no master-cast in faith and doctrine ; they cry not for exclusive distinctions and unshared privileges. "*Liberty of conscience for all men,*" appears the first article in their creed, and safety from sectarian persecution, their prayer for others, and for themselves. This blessed privilege, the birthright of man, they enjoyed to the fullest extent, under the splendid despotism of that singular person, whom they raised to the government of their nation, and whom they never would have abandoned, had not their love of constitutional liberty been keener than their love of national glory. They submitted to change, only because they hoped for amelioration.

Buonaparte, who had made his unrestricted power the pioneer to any despotism which might succeed his own, was well aware that catholicism was the fit religion for a despot ; and that there was no instance of any country in Europe, where freedom and catholicism dwelt together. He therefore built up her ruined temples, and raised her prostrate standard ; but he made her impotent in her influence, and powerless in her agency. He held the chief of her church in "durance vile ;" he sheathed her blood-stained sword in a scab-

bard of peace, nor suffered the embers of her martyr-fires to be again rekindled. "Shorn of her beams," this once powerful ruler of the human mind could no longer incarcerate in dungeons, burn at the stake, nor torture on the wheel. Retaining her title of sovereignty, without one particle of its power, "she held a barren sceptre," and imaged the future destiny of him, who, in his isle of rocks, reigned only over a few willing subjects, by the ties of ancient habitudes, ancient affections, and ancient prejudices.

In reviving the order of the priesthood, he rendered them dependant on the state, and thus deprived them of all temporal influence. He restored no oppressive tithes, for their maintenance; he permitted no enormous revenues, for their extravagance; he gave them no special exemptions, nor exclusive privileges; and his estimate of their utility and influence was curiously marked, in the well-known circumstance of his having assigned the same revenue to the *Archbishop of Paris*, as to his own *maître de chapelle*. Thus the fruits of that once powerful see, the object of ambition to the illustrious Noailles and haughty Harlays, exceeded in nothing the revenue of the composer of *Elfrida*, and the "*Zingari en Fiera*."*

The Catholic religion, therefore, as revived in France, was a state religion, lending its seal to civil forms, and adding the weight of its venerable character to the novelty of political institutes. Alike free from persecution, or disunion, it left each man to the dictates of his own conscience, or the conviction of his own mind. It tolerated all other sects, while to its own faithful adherents it presented all it had ever possessed of beneficent

* The incomparable Paesello, *maître de chapelle* to the Emperor.

and good. It had still power to console, but it was no longer capable of persecution. It opened its consecrated temples for the *oraisons* of the devout ; but it presented no pageant shows for the amusement of the idle, nor was it taught to recall, to the generation of the nineteenth century, all that was ludicrous and profane, in the barbarous superstitions of the fourteenth.

The restoration of the many religious processions, which have taken place since the return of Louis XVIII. is a subject of universal disgust and derision to all classes in his dominions, with the exception of those, whose interest it is to countenance them ; and the sarcasms which I heard levelled against these ceremonies, even by the *menu peuple*, during two Sundays that I assisted at the *fête-dieu*, in Paris, were quite sufficient to convince me that in France, as *Scagnerelle* says, “ *on a changé tout cela.*”

The *fête-dieu* is one of the most solemn and splendid festivals in the Roman church, and its preparations and rehearsals occupied and thronged the streets of Paris, for some days before the great performance took place. In every direction crowds of workmen, carpenters, upholsterers, and gardeners, were seen fitting up the *repositoires*, or temporary chapels, before which the procession was to halt, where the host was to be elevated, and a short service performed. These *repositoires* were generally placed before the *porte-cochère*, or gateway of some public building. There was one before the prison of l'Abbaye, and another before the *palais de justice*. But that which struck me most for its splendor and its extreme research, was before the portals of the minister of police, M. de Caze ; and, I believe, raised under his own *immediate direction*. It was a sort of al-

cove, open to the street, and in its whole arrangement something like one of those decorated recesses, in which *Columbine*, standing on one leg upon a pedestal, first presents herself to the charmed eyes of *Harlequin*, in our Christmas pantomimes. This hallowed structure was lined and hung with different coloured velvets and showy silks, trimmed with gold fringe, and artificial flowers, decorated with prints and roses, with relics and toys, with crowns of thorns, and *fleurs de lis*. The high altar, raised above many richly carpeted steps, was the centre of all that was most precious in piety and taste, covered with baskets of exotics and silver candlesticks, with fruit in wax-work, and saints in *or molé*, and exhibiting to the eyes of faith and loyalty, a Christ on a crucifix, and a plaster bust of Louis XVIII. both fresh and new, and done expressly for the occasion.

When I passed by this *reposoir*, at a late hour on the eve of the festival, the workmen were finishing it by candle and lamp light.—“*Quelle dépense*,” said my husband to a gentleman, who was talking to us, at the window of our carriage. “*Et pour quelle bêtise !*” answered the driver of a cabriolet, who had stopped his little vehicle to gaze on the *reposoir*. As we lived near the Abbaye St. Germain, in which parish one of the first Sunday processions took place, we were awakened with the dawn on the preceding morning, by the noise of hammering, and the tingling of bells ; and on walking out we found the houses of every street, through which the procession was to pass, bedecked and ornamented according to the ability or taste of the owner ; for, *bon gré, mal gré*, every one was obliged to contribute to the show of the day, though few had any re-

collection, *how the thing was got up* upon former occasions.

During the preceding day, the street-passenger ran the risk of suffocation by the dust of ages, which was shaken out of carpets, tapestry, and blankets, at every door; all in preparation for "*la dernière répétition.*" The poverty of some of these decorations, and the incongruity of others; the brilliant colours of the new Gobelin tapestry, the faded hues of the old; the simple white sheet, (*faute de mieux*) or thread-bare blanket, (*faute de tout*) gave a sort of rag-fair appearance to the noble fauxbourg St Germain, which not even the many pictures and busts of the King and the Virgin, profusely distributed among the "shreds and patches" of piety, could relieve or dignify. When the procession, with its *dramatis personæ*, appeared, all the scenery and machinery lost its attraction, and the actors themselves took exclusive hold of our breathless attention.

Of the two processions which I witnessed, what struck me most in the first was the vanguard, a little boy of four years old, dressed in regimentals, who I thought at first was meant to be a caricature of Buonaparte, but who, a pious old lady assured me, represented St. John the Baptist. What interested me in the second was, that the rear was composed of the royal family, and M. Chateaubriand! The procession of the *fête-dieu* was preceded and announced by a very fine band of music, and passed through the centre of the streets, which on each side were filled with a multitude of people, curious to see a spectacle so long denied them. Then followed, in order, the servants of the house de Montmorenci, in their

singular and rich liveries, and some of the domestics* of the royal establishment. The confraternity of the rosary (above a hundred females,) all attired in white, crowned with lilies, half veiled, and carrying wax tapers, succeeded to the lackies and valets de chambre, and were followed by the "*catéchistes*," or young females admitted recently to confirmation, all in the same vestal hue, even to their shoes. Among these latter I beheld, to my astonishment, the noble daughters of the illustrious house *de Montmorenci*, accompanied by their pious, *femmes de chambre*; all chanting hymns, "*avec leurs voix pures et virginales*," like the fair chorussers in "*Esther*," at St. Cyr. The choir succeeded, consisting of a number of stout young priestlings, recently initiated, dressed in white robes; some flinging their massive silver censers in the air, while clouds of frankincense and myrrh rose with loud hosannahs to the skies, and others flung rose-leaves, from ornamented baskets, beneath their feet.

This solemn act was performed every ten minutes, the whole *corps dramatique* stopping short, turning round, and bowing profoundly to the *dais*, or canopy, which followed close behind, and which contained the holy mystery of the *host*, lying on a cushion of crimson and gold! The *dais* was composed of four short transverse poles, something like a *bier* or a child's *go-cart*, surmounted with a splendid canopy, under which two prelates, in *grand pontificals*, who carried the *host*, walked

* It is an old custom of state and piety in France, for the noblesse to send their servants to these processions, and thus to show off their liveries and devotion at the same time. "*Que ferons-nous de nos domestiques ce carême ?*" said a fair pietist, who was lamenting that there were no processions. "*Nous les ferons jeûner*," was the reply of her equally pious friend.

with a motion irregular and slow as the first tottering steps of infancy, an irregularity communicated by a want of uniformity in the movement of those who carried the poles of the *dais*. On either side of the *sanc-tum sanctorum* walked some of the peers of France and *cordons bleus*, all bare-headed, and in full costume, accompanied by the *maires* of the *arrondissemens*. Immediately behind the tabernacle, with eyes up-turned and elevated head, appeared M. Chateaubriand, the "*philosopher of the desert*," in blue and silver. The whole was closed with a troop of soldiers, and in the neighborhood of *Notre Dame* the cortege of the *fête dieu* was ennobled and enlarged by the presence of royalty itself!

There the Count d'Artois, the Duc and Duchesse d'Angouleme, and the Duc and Duchesse de Berri, joined the pious train, with uncovered heads, and carrying wax tapers. Thrice they thus paced the holy rounds of *Notre Dame* with royal pilgrim steps, to the delight of the pious, and to the amusement of their less devout subjects, who thus saw the heads of the state lending their powerful sanction to forms and customs, which reason and opinion had long consigned to oblivion; who thus beheld the days of the vow-making Louis XIII. and of the pious revoker of the edict of Nantz again restored, and the progress of illumination checked by the ordinances and example of the government.

As far as my observations went, as I mixed among the promiscuous crowd, pretty generally, the feelings excited by this parade of royal piety and fantastic devotion, were not universally those of edification or applause. "*On a beau faire*," said a woman, as she kneeled down beside me while the *host* passed by. "*Ce-là ne tiendra pas*," hummed a man, who resumed his

hat and wiped the dust off his knees, when the procession was gone. "*Ah ! la vilaine femme !*" exclaimed a French lady of my acquaintance, whom I recognized in the crowd, and who, pointing out her former *femme de-chambre*, demurely chanting in the chorus of the *confraternity*, whispered me "*Ah ! ma chère, cette femme ne m'a pas laissé un morceau de dentelle ; c'est la plus grande voleuse, et la plus grande tracassière du monde : cependant elle contrefait la dévote, dans nos nouveauté religieuses. Ah ! la vilaine femme !*" and she repeated her exclamation, as the pious purloiner of lace passed close by her. "*Voyez donc notre grand imbécille demaire,*" said a pretty *bourgeoise*, pinching the arm of the youth she was leaning on, as the *maires des arrondissemens* passed by ; while a man, whose appearance was not much above that of a water-carrier, observed aloud, as he stumbled over a *kneeling old woman* : "*Sacré ! s'ils veulent prier Dieu, qu'ils prient dans leur église.*"

While the revival of processions obtains so little popularity among the lower classes in the capital, they are looked on with at least equal indifference by the peasantry ; and the attempts made to collect a pious force round the ambulating shrine of a village saint, have been found as abortive, in some places, as the attempts made in favor of the installation of the "royal bust,"*

* Several noted *fêtes*, and of course several processions, took place at Paris, while I resided there. The *fête de l'Ascension*, which was also the *fête de Louis* Treize*, who made a vow to celebrate that day, was very fine. The vow of the royal and pious *Nimrod* of France, was fulfilled by his descendants. The royal family walked upon the occasion ; the princes held up the cords of the canopy. It was a singular circumstance, that this day was also la *fête de Buonaparte*. The procession was attended by the *corps municipal* and state officers, bishops, priests, and royal almoners, and Monsieur Chateaubriand ! who seems to let himself out, like the mutes of a funeral, for these loyal and pious exhibitions.

in others. In Boulogne-sur-mer, orders were given for a procession, in honor of the Virgin, whose wrath, it was declared, had caused that abundance of rain, which threatened ruin to all the *vignerons* and farmers in France. Some of her festivals had not been duly celebrated, since the restoration of festivals in France, and a well-founded jealousy had discharged itself in torrents of rain, which I had the misfortune to witness, during the greater part of my residence in the land of her displeasure. The priests, however, of Boulogne, to their horror, *could not find a single Virgin*, in that maritime city, to carry in procession, and were at last obliged to send a deputation into a neighbouring village, and request the *loan of a Virgin*, until they could get one of their own. A Virgin was at last procured, a little indeed the worse for wear; but this was not a moment for fastidiousness. The holy brotherhood assembled, and the *Madonna* was paraded through the streets; but no devout laity followed in her train, and no rainbow of promise spoke the cessation of her wrath. The people would not walk; the rain would not stop; the Virgin was sent back, to *pout* in her native village; and the miracle expected to be wrought, was strictly according to Voltaire's heretical definition of *all* miracles—"une chose qui n'est jamais arrivée."

At the commencement of the revolution, a similar procession was made in the neighbourhood of Paris, by the *curé* of a village, and while he was moving solemnly under a canopy with the shrine of St. G  nevi  ve, the rain fell in such torrents, that "*saute qui peut*" was the reigning maxim of the moment; and the officiating minister, left almost alone under his canopy, observed to those who carried it, "*mes amis, elle croit que c'est la*

plus que nous demandons." Whether the Virgin of Boulogne made the same mistake, it is impossible to say; but certain it is, that the rain continued during the whole summer a punishment to French sinners, and a disappointment to English travellers.

To overload religion with forms and ceremonies, is always to injure its cause. Truth wants no ornament; religion is in itself an *abstraction*; "the evidence of things unseen." It is ever to be regretted that the first religious ceremony, mentioned in holy writ, caused the first *murder*, in the *first* and *only* family then upon earth.

While processions are still but coldly received, images and relics have regained but little of their long-lost importance. And though they are set up and ordered to be worshipped, "*de par le roi*"; invested, like the priesthood, the *cent Suisses*, and all the other appendages of legitimacy, in France, with their former dignity and powers; yet, generally speaking, they exhibit a most forlorn and neglected appearance; and, as they stand or tumble in their niches, are no bad barometers of the state of the rustic piety of the quarter they inhabit. We observed indeed along the high roads of France *Madonnas*, who had suffered in the wars of the revolution, and who still exhibited much of the negligence of the republican toilette; some without a petticoat, and others without a *nose*, while the head of *St. G  nevi  ve*, recently placed on the figure of St. Peter (distinguished by his massive key,) and a *fleur de lis* stuck under the stump of a broken-armed St. Denis, presented the evidences of days of past sacrilege, together with hopes of returning piety. The fortune of the saints has long, in France, exclusively depended on the rise and fall of the

public stock of faith ; and many a one, who twenty years back would not have given an assignat for a share in "the whole army of martyrs," is now buying up the finger of St. Louis, at any price !

Wherever the royal family were expected to pass, on the occasion of the *two restorations*, or in their respective journies into the interior of the kingdom, the *via sacra* is distinguished by the new setting-up of prostrate images, and neglected crosses. The crucifix, placed at the port of Dieppe when *Madame* landed, is, I think, for size and colouring, the most formidable image that ever was erected to scare, or to edify. And the *Madonna* exhibited in the church of St. Jaques, in the same town, and on the same important occasion, was evidently, in the hurry of the unexpected honour, suddenly transported from the bowsprit of some English trader ; and had doubtless stood many a hard gale, as the "*lovely Betty*," or "*sprightly Kitty*," before she was removed to receive divine honours, as *notre dame de St. Jaques* ; where, dressed in English muslin, and in a *coëffure à la Chinoise*, to show she is above prejudice, she takes her place with Louis the Eighteenth,* who shines in all the radiance of plaster of Paris, on an altar beside her.

In travelling through Normandy, I asked our postilion, why he did not salute an image of the Virgin, which, new painted and crowned with flowers, stood in a niche by the road side ? He shrugged his shoulders, and replied ; "*mais c'est passé, madame, tout cela.*" Such I believe, generally speaking, is the present state

* This Virgin, as might be expected, warmly embraces the cause of the Bourbon, to whom she owes her elevation, and wears a wreath of lilies, and supports the *drapeau blanc*.

of "*graven images*," and of the religion supported by "*graven images*," in France.

Speaking of the peasantry, in the neighbourhood of Versailles, Madame de Maintenon observes, "*quand j'ai voulu savoir d'eux, qui a fait le Pater, ils n'en savent rien. Qui a fait le Credo? encore moins. S'ils adorent lavierge? Oui: S'ils adorent les saints? oui-dà. Si on péche de manquer la messe un jour ouvrier? Oui, certes.*"

Of all the religious grievances of which the French peasantry and the labouring classes now complain, as falling the heaviest, the necessity they are under of attending mass, on working days, and the strict observance imposed on them, by the *maires*, or magistrates of many of the *communes*, to religiously observe all feasts and festivals, and even certain hours, in particular days dedicated to particular saints, on pain of a heavy penalty, is the most oppressive. These agents for the revived claims of the long-forgotten legion of saints, frequently levy their fines, without mercy, on the profane but industrious peasant, who takes up his spade during the vigil of *St. Didymus*, or who plies the wheel, on the feast of *St. Catherine*.

Under the reign of Napoleon, idleness met no quarter, even though dictated by *saints*, or enforced by doctrines. Every body worked and prayed, according to their vocation, and interests were not crushed, nor indolence encouraged, under the sanction of ceremonies and forms, having no real connexion with either faith or reason. I could perceive that the religious toleration, enjoyed by the peasantry in common with the rest of the population, under his reign, was a subject to them of grateful remembrance, and they have more

than once led to it with characteristic traits, that gave them point and interest.

A peasant woman of some remote province, whom revolutionary vicissitude had placed in the neighbourhood of the village of Sevres, (and who, recommending herself to me as "*chef d'un magasin de blanchissage*," thus spared the dignity of my page from the pollution of a homelier term for her profession) afforded me infinite amusement in her weekly visit to our hotel in Paris, by the quaintness and *naïveté* of her observations. When I beheld her from the window, driving up the street in her *charette*, mounted on piles of snowy linen, surrounded by her nymphs, guarded by her great dog, and led by her *garçon*, I always hastened to receive this queen of soap-suds myself, in the anti-room, leaving one of her *dames d'honneur* to arrange the official duties of her calling with my *femme-de-chambre*, in the adjoining apartment. She was a little, shrivelled, brown woman, with black petulant eyes and marked countenance; and with her scarlet jacket, striped petticoat of many breadths, high *cornette*, and massy gold cross and earrings, she presented a figure and *costume*, which the very genius of masquerade might safely have adopted, both for its originality and singular effect. She was always in a flurry, always in a passion, always full of news, always full of curiosity, and frequently undertook to correct my *patois*, while I should have lamented much, had any one corrected her's. When the weather was wet, she dried "*les gilets et jupons par artifice, madame!*" She would pardon the king much for giving "*la nation une princesse, blanche comme la neige,*" and

she called her dog "*Cleopatra*," because she liked the names of great men!—" *c'est si beau, cela.*"

One day, when she was later in her weekly returns than usual, she entered my dressing-room, not in the meekness of excuse, pleading a fault, but in a passion, perfectly dramatic :

" *Eh bien, madame, vous voilà peu contente de moi ; n'est-ce pas ? Eh bien, c'est not' religion, morbleu, qui se mêle de not' blanchissage, voilà !*"

I could not readily understand what religion had to do with her vocation : I asked what she meant. "*Bien, vous allez voir, ma petite bonne dame. C'est not' gobe-mouche de maire, qui nous défend de faire not' lavage tel et tel jour. C'est aujourd'hui la fête de St. François, c'est demain la veille de St. Ambrose. Voilà un beau chien de plaisir que d'avoir des saints et des maires, qui nous défendent de vivre.* Et bien ! ma chère dame, on a beau crier. Mais voilà CELUI !† jamais il ne se mêloit de not' lavage ; jamais ne m'a-t-il défendu de sécher mes jupons et mes gilets tel jour que je voudrois. Cependant, on dit qu'il est pendu par les Anglais—tant pis ; bon jour, madame !*"‡

* A fine of fifteen francs is demanded, as a penalty for work done on the *jours de fête*, which are nearly of daily recurrence. Sometimes five *fêtes* occur in one week, and a labouring man, who counted them over to me, deplored this loss of time and gain as a new and severe grievance.

† "*Celui*" is the mystic term, by which Buonaparte is now mentioned by all the lower classes. I have frequently seen "*celui*," written in all manner of ways, on gates and posts, &c. &c.

‡ This reference to my blanchisseuse, resembles the anecdote of the old dame, who cursed *Colbert* every day she made an *omelette*, because he had put a *tax* upon eggs. I believe, however, there is no question, but that the peasantry have a general preference for Buonaparte. Those

And with this conclusion, which she did not wait to hear affirmed or denied, she scudded away, indifferent, perhaps, to the fate of "*celui*," or whether he was hanged or not; but taught by experience how valuable was the toleration he had established, even to her little interests and comforts, and, like the rest of her class, drawing comparisons, under the influence of her own feelings, more to his benefit, than to the advantage of those who succeeded him.

While I was in the district of la Beauce, a farmer solicited the renewal of a lease, or *baille*, which it was in the power of government to grant, through the interest of General de C——, whose chateau was in the neighbourhood. As he was a man of most unblemished character, and the father of a family, his application was attended to. But it having been intimated that the farmer had been married during those days of the revolution, when the *civil contract* was a sufficient ratification of the marriage vow, it was made a condition for the compliance with his request, that he should be *married over again by a priest*, as the government would naturally give a preference to a candidate, who submitted to all the forms and doctrines of the catholic church. The farmer replied, that he had been married two and twenty years to a very faithful and affectionate wife, with whom he had lived in great harmony and happiness; that his sons and daughters were growing up around them, and that he would not stamp their birth with illegitimacy, nor a virtuous woman with infamy, by submitting to a *second* marriage, which would naturally invalidate the

of Bourgogne, always inclined to revolutionary principles, believed that he was returning into France at the head of an army of negroes. It was necessary to deny this, formally, in that province.

first, though that marriage had been celebrated according to the laws of his country then existing. "I believe, madam," said the *ultra-royalist* gentleman, who related to me the anecdote a few days after it occurred, and who knew all the parties, "I believe it is not necessary to give you a stronger instance of the absence of all religion among our peasantry of the present day, or of their degeneracy from the faith of their forefathers."

It is curious, however, to observe that some popular superstitions survive the bigotry which once accompanied them, more especially in the remote provinces, wherever education has not yet made its illuminated progress.

An eminent physician in Paris, native of *les petites Alpes*, a mountainous district between Lyons and Geneva, assured me, that he had known a young man driven from his village, by the odium of belonging to a family accused "*d'avoir un nom*," which is tantamount to the "*evil eye*," in Ireland. And the conjuror preserving his "*magique blanc et noir*," still retains a portion of respect, when superstition more imposing, and charlatans more dignified, have lost their credit with the people.

Of this character, once so high in consideration, Rousseau has made a charming use in his *Devin du Village*, and Farquhar a most humourous one, in his Recruiting Officer. It is thus that genius, among her splendid fictions, records the characteristic traits of ages and nations; and registering facts which the chronicler neglects as notorious, and the historian overlooks as undignified, preserves embalmed the most interesting features of humanity, for the contemplation of the philosopher, and the instruction of posterity.

The catalogue of popular superstitions is neither very extensive nor very various, and presents nearly the same images in all countries. Melancholy sounds breathed at melancholy hours will always be portentous to ignorance; and fear will ever exert its most harassing dominion over the imagination, in seasons of sorrow and affliction. Thus, in France as in England, the howl of a dog at the cottage of the dying peasant, is more certain death than the disease which kills him. And the *Irish benshi* has her pendant in the French owl, which is always considered "*oiseau de mauvais augure*," when she sends forth her midnight screams near the chamber of the sick. A goat in the stable is esteemed, in France, a sure protection from contagion to the cattle with which it associates, and ranks most probably with the *bracket-hen*, which, in Ireland, holds so distinguished a place among the *lares* and *pénates* of the cottage hearth.

* * * * *

"*Je veux que le moindre paysan mette une poule dans le pot, les dimanches*," is a saying of *Henri IV.* which has rendered his memory more precious in France than all he has ever said or done beside. And this simple and benevolent "*je veux*" will perhaps survive in the memory of the nation, when the pretty "*mots de sentiment*," which royal eloquence is now made to utter, shall be forgotten, or remembered only to be reprobated as the jargon of insincerity, dictated by bad taste. *Henry IV.** did not live to see this philanthropic wish accomplished; and whether his great views, and those of

* When the death of *Henry IV.* was known to the people of Paris, nothing was heard, on every side, but cries of "*nous avons perdu notre père.*"

His able minister, would finally have produced such an effect among their other happy consequences, the spirit of religious fanaticism that cut short the days of France's best king, has left it impossible to ascertain.

It must, however, be a source of infinite satisfaction to his descendants, to find, on their return to the government of their kingdom, that the prayer of their great grandsire is accomplished, and that "*le moindre paysan*" not only "*met une poule dans le pot, les dimanches,*" but even puts a little flesh meat into his *marmite*, on week-days. To the enjoyment of this luxury, under the reign of Louis XIV. and his immediate successors, there were two insurmountable barriers—the taxes of the *taille* and of the *gabelle*. The mode of dividing and subdividing the *taille*, was among its greatest grievances. When the minister of finance demanded a certain sum for the exigencies of a war, or the expenses of building or adorning a palace for the king, or his mistresses,* (and these palaces rose like the fairy castles, which the incantations of magic conjure into existence) the tax imposed on the kingdom was subdivided, ac-

* Beside the continual repairs and decorations made in the palaces of Fontainbleau, St. Germain, en Laye, St. Cloud, Meudon, Compiègne, and Chambord, the most ancient of the royal palaces, there have been raised, since the reign of Louis XIV. Versailles, Marli, the Great and Little Trianon, Clugny, Maintenon, (upon the aqueducts of which such large sums were expended, as excited a general murmur against its lady,) Bellevue, (constructed for Mad. de Pompadour,) Luciennes, for Mad. du Barry, and Bagatelle, built by the Count de Artois, (for a wager) within six weeks. To these expensive palaces, meant solely to vary the pleasures of the king and his mistresses, must be added St. Cyr, unquestionably established as a palace of retreat, for the authoress of the dragonades and massacres of the Cevennes.

cording to the superior interest of the nobility at court, who were governors of the provinces.* This partial division, by which the *impost* always fell lightest on those most able to bear its infliction, was again followed by a more partial subdivision, until at last the burthen was thrown almost exclusively upon those unprotected individuals, who were at the mercy of the great man, or the *great man's great man*, in every town or parish. The governors, who imitated in their provincial courts the splendor and extravagance of the king, purchased their magnificence, and preserved their situations, by exactions and extortions which sometimes drove the people to insurrection. The memory of the *Duke de Richelieu* is still execrated in the province he governed, in the reign of Louis XV. Even the friends of the *Duke de Chaulnes* have left, in their private correspondences, such testimonies of his atrocious conduct in *Bretagne*, (under Louis XIV.) as consigns this otherwise obscure and mediocre person to eternal ignominy.†

* Il examinèrent, comment il seroit possible d'augmenter sourdement les aides, la gabelle, et autres impôts. Quand tout étoit arrangé, dans le secret, avec les sang-sues publiques, les interressés appuyoient les projets au conseil, et les faisoient passer.—

Intrigue du Cabinet, vol. i. p. 244.

† The duke de Richelieu, speaking of his government of Guienne, observes that he could do there what he liked, "*où personne n'oseroit lui rien dire, étant bien avec le maître Louis XV.*" His cruelty and exactions nearly produced an insurrection in the province, and finally caused the suppression of the parliament of Bourdeaux. It was upon this occasion, that Louis XV. made *profession de foi*, on the subject of divine right. "*Je leur ferai voir (les parlemens,) que je ne tiens mon pouvoir que de Dieu; que je n'ai de compte à rendre qu'à lui, et que personne ne doit s'opposer à ma volonté ?*" How little he then suspected, that this divine right would not only be questioned, but denied to his unfortunate

*"On a fait une taxe de cent mille écus sur les bourgeois ; (says Mad. de Sevigné, speaking of the capital of la Bretagne, and of the disturbances occasioned by its taxes and the oppressions of its governor) et si on ne trouve point cette somme dans vingt quatre heures, elle sera doublée, et exigible par les soldats. On a chassé et banni toute une grande rue, et défendu de les recueillir, sur peine de la vie ; de sorte qu'on voyoit tous ces misérables, femmes accouchées, vieillards, enfans ; errer en pleurs au sortir de cette ville, (Rennes) sans savoir où aller, sans avoir de nourriture, ni de quoi se coucher. On a pris soixante bourgeois, on commence demain à pendre. Cette province est un bel exemple pour les autres, et sur tout de respecter les gouverneurs, et les gouvernantes, de ne point leur dire d'injures, et de ne point leur jeter des pierres dans leur jardins. Les punitions et les taxes ont été cruelles ; il-y-auroit des * histoires tragiques à vous conter, d'ici à demain."*

Tragical indeed ! for twelve men were broken alive upon the wheel, *suspected* of having conspired against the life of the all-powerful governor, who had thus goaded into madness a simple people, which could scarcely speak any language to be understood. Mad. de Sevigné drops this dreadful topic, to give the history of

successor ! In 1789, it was proposed in the National Assembly to give Louis XVI. the title of "*Roi des Français, par le consentement de la nation,*" and to suppress the formula, "*par la grace de Dieu.*" It was upon this occasion that Petion exclaimed, "*c'est calomnier Dieu ! Charles IX. étoit-il aussi roi, par la grace de Dieu ?*"

* It was in this moment of national suffering, when these cruel exactions were made on the people, that Mad. de Montespan was raising her superb palace of Clugny. The disturbances of la Bretagne were perhaps the first throes of the great convulsions, which followed long after ; they proceeded at least from the same cause.

her pretty dog, "*Sylphide, blond comme un blondin*;" for such was the character of the times—cruelty and frivolity—the affectation of sentiment, and the absence of sensibility!

If the *taille* was one reason, why the peasant, drained to the last farthing of his earnings, could not conveniently put "his chicken into the pot," the *gabelle* was another. And it was in such times that the French peasant, like the modern Greeks under the Turkish despotism, concealed any little hoard they might have amassed, and lived in seeming wretchedness, to escape those exactions, which would have rendered their poverty real, had it been discovered or suspected.

But no *taille*, no *gabelle* now exists, and the French peasant is at last enabled to "*mettre la poule dans le pot, les dimanches*." How long, however, this privilege, this luxury, may be retained, it is for the advocates of "*le bon vieux temps*" to declare.

The peasants table, in France, is of course regulated by his circumstances, and by the nature and soil of his native province. But from all I could learn, from persons of all ranks and all parties,* plenty, even to abundance, has hitherto been found among this class, and has been interrupted only by the ravages lately made on their property by the armies of almost every nation in Europe. The presence of these armies caused enormous losses to the proprietors of vineyards, particularly in the south, where the vines were wantonly torn up by the roots. In the pasturage districts or provinces, they

* I asked a royalist, who has a considerable landed property, whether his tenants could afford to eat meat often in the week? He answered me with petulance, "And why not?" "But (I said) it was not always so before the revolution." "*Eh! mais non*." And he shrugged his shoulders, and hemmed and finished with the usual, "*Mais, que voulez-vous?*"

made, of their *laitage*, a principal article of food, under the form of cheeses, cream cakes, and porridges; but I observed that in France milk was rarely taken in its simple state, as among our peasantry. In Normandy, the farms are all well stocked with cows. In the Isle of France, this useful animal is so scarce, that in many places the goat's milk is exclusively used, and is even occasionally made into cheese.

The peasantry, for the most part, take four meals a day: a very slight breakfast when they rise, which is generally of thin soup; the grand *déjeuner* at eleven o'clock, (which is, in fact, their dinner); their *gouté*, or sort of luncheon, of raw vegetables and bread and butter; and their supper, which generally consists of meat and vegetables (as at their dinners), made into a *ragoût*. Light wine and water is their general drink: a beverage produced from chesnuts, and cider are also occasionally used, but are neither of them held in estimation by the "*véritables Amphytrions*, of rural *savoir vivre*." "*Une petite goutte de liqueur*," is a delicacy to which they are no strangers, while every village *guinguette* supplies an imitation of that foreign luxury, "*la bonne double bière de Mars*," which is of the same quality as that very worst beverage, the "poor creature, *small beer*," in England.

* * * * *

Hospitality is the virtue of semi-civilized nations. It is a resource against the tedium of ignorance and inanity; and none think it "greater solitude to be alone," than those, who are the least qualified to contribute to social enjoyment. The French peasantry are said to have been more hospitable, in their days of profound ignorance and extreme poverty, than in their present improv-

ed condition. It is also certain that there are much fewer calls upon this virtue (if it be one), than there formerly must have been, when poverty was the vow, and beggary the profession of a large class of the people. The catering friar, the mendicant monk, the wandering pilgrim, no longer present themselves at the cottage-door, to cherish a spirit of hospitality, through the medium of a mistaken charity, or under the influence of a powerful bigotry. Competency is also so equally distributed, and industry so well rewarded, that few are urged by want or idleness to put their neighbour's generosity, to the test; and curiosity, that insatiable appetite, which so often makes the stranger's welcome, has been, during the last years, fed to surfeit, by the fluctuating crowds which have passed from all nations before the door of the French cottage. The *droits-réunis* have likewise proved a check to the exercise of this primitive virtue: for the hope of selling "*le petit pot de vin*," under the rose,* no longer secures to the traveller a "collation" along with it.

* * * * *

"*Tout pays, où la mendicité est une profession, est mal-gouverné*," says Voltaire. I should suppose, from my own observations, that the country in the world the most infected by mendicity is Ireland; and the country the least taxed with this disgusting and always vicious branch of community, is France. The whole of this order, now existing there, may be comprised in those little groups of cripples, which neither disgust by filth, nor annoy by importunity; and which, gathering round the

* Passing by a little *guinguette*, in *la Brie*, I perceived written over the door in French, as old as the *Romance of the Rose*, the first line of *Rosalind's* epilogue, "Good wine needs no bush." The proverb, therefore, was common to both countries.

traveller's carriage on the high roads, quietly detail the infliction, which induces them to interest the benevolence of the "*très charitable monsieur*." "*C'est une vérité incontestable*," says Chamfort, speaking of the state of France, on the eve of the revolution, "*qu'il-y-a en France sept millions d'hommes, qui demandent l'aumône, et douze millions, hors d'état de la leur faire*."

This frightful picture of national poverty is corroborated by Mr. Young, who made his second tour to France at this period, and who observes that the original sin of its institutions struck at the root of national prosperity, and produced a poverty, that "reminded him of Ireland." The improved condition of the lower classes has had an inevitable influence on the evil of mendicity, and the hopes of idleness and imposture were finally crushed by the laudable efforts of the Comte de Pontcoulant.* This gentleman began his salutary reforms upon the class of *fainéans*, during his prefectship at Brussels, and receiving the sanction and assistance of the imperial government, drove the young and indolent into the workshops and manufactories; and placed the old and infirm in asylums and hospitals. How far the revival of old institutions, the return of the religious orders, and the encouragement of religious houses, may have an effect upon this suppressed class, it is impossible to say; or whether some future preacher in the pulpit of St. Leu, or St. Gilles,† may not give a new impulse to his flocks, and again address to them the words humourously attributed to the ancient *curé* of that parish—"mes

* The Comte de P—— distinguished himself in the revolution. Loaded with honours by Napoleon, he was made count of the empire, peer, senator, and commandant of the legion of honour.

† Formerly noted, as the parishes of *convulsionnaires* and beggars.

chers gueux, qui risquez les galères, en passant votre vie à mendier, entrez dans l'un des quatre ordres mendiants, vous serez riches et honorés."

The virtue of charity therefore, like that of hospitality, lies at present latent, for want of objects to call it into action. But if latent, it is not dead: There is no nation more strongly endowed with that physical sensibility, which promptly responds to the cry of suffering, and which awakens that ready and uncalculating sympathy, "whose pity gives, ere charity begins." The readiness with which an orphan, or unprovided child (the *illustré malheureux* of some village or hamlet) is adopted by a friendly neighbour or benevolent relative, is a proof that charity wants neither the means, nor the feeling to bestow its relief, when circumstances call upon its exertion.

* * * * *

Country girls and children, without shoes or stockings; things calling themselves women, but in reality "walking dunghills;" and "ploughmen at work, without *sabots*, or feet to their stockings,"* are details given by a liberal English traveller of the state of the French peasant's wardrobe, in the year 1788. Still, however, even then, the French peasant had his "*habit-de-fête*," like the Irish cotter, who appears in the tattered garments of misery all the week, to be enabled to exhibit his *blue-frize cota-more*, and best brogues, at the Sunday "pattern," or yearly fair.

There is an intimate connexion between vanity and

* This partial covering of the leg is universal among the peasantry of Ireland, at this day, under the name of "*traheens*." And "*I doat upon your traheens*," is a phrase of endearment, commonly used as indicating "I doat upon the most miserable article about you."

poverty. Ostentation is the legitimate offspring of both. The peasant toilette of France now extends itself to the every-day comforts of working apparel. During my residence there, I did not see one instance of a bare-footed, or bare-legged person, not even among the children; and "*être bien chaussée*," seems a passion in France, from the *petite-maîtresse* in her cob-web, "*bas de coton*," at thirty francs a pair, down to the *demoiselle* *Georgette*, who draws her "*bas de laine*" tightly over the smart ankle she has no objection to exhibit.

The details of dress, among the peasants, appear to vary in every province, and to rule in each with a precise and undeviating uniformity. One bright colour may be seen glowing through a whole commune, and one stripe maintains its supremacy over the petticoats of an entire *arrondissement*. Thus, "*un gros rouge*," is the delight of the dames of Auvergne, and "*un bleu céleste*" the passion of the *élégantes* of Limousin.

In passing through Picardy and Artois, I observed, that, while the old women preserved the lofty *cornette* of ancient times, the young had adopted the high mitred *coëffure* of the Chinese modes; a fashion which, though long *passé* in Paris, the hostess of an auberge where we stopped in Abbeville assured me was in her town "*une nouveauté la plus nouvelle*." In general, however, caps with immense borders, that sweep below the shoulders, and straw hats, are the prevailing head-dresses upon all occasions. The petticoat and corset, almost invariably of two distinct colours, relieved with white sleeves, of linen, or woollen web: gold chains round the neck, fastened with a heart, and suspending a large gold cross, are elegancies of the toilette scarcely ever dispensed

with upon any occasion, and are frequently worn even upon working days.

The district of the *Caennois* is the very *foyer* of the Normandy fashions, and a fair *Caennoise*, perfectly "*endimanchée*," or attired in her Sunday finery, exhibits a complexity of costume, to which many centuries must have lent their progressive inventions, which probably began under William the Conqueror, and received its last finishing touches on the arrival of *Madams** at Dieppe. The cap of the fashionable *Caennoise* emulates, in height, the steeple of the church, which is the mart of her finery; her *luxu de jupe* is typical of its dimensions, and the pendulum of its clock is rivalled in the enormous gold drops, which vibrate in either ear.

It is curious to observe, that such nearly was the dress of the better order of dames, in the days of Charles IX. and that the peasantry were, under his cruel and bigotted reign, better clad and better conditioned, than under that of Louis XV. "All," (says an author, whose researches into the ancient costumes of France are extremely profound) "all the peasantry then wore "*des souliers commodes*;" but this was not the case, under the reign of "*le bien aimé*." The taxation, which went in part to supply the toilettes of Dubarry, et de Pompadour, naturally limited the elegancies of the peasant-wardrobe, and even obtruded upon its necessities, as Mr. Young's "*moving dunghills*," at that period, evince.

The influence of the toilette is universal in France, and it is far from being exclusively an object of female de-

* When Mad. d'Angouleme landed a second time in France at Dieppe, all the old *poissardes* and ancient dames of the town, dressed in full costume, went down to the port to receive her royal highness, and insisted on drawing her carriage to the town-house.

velion, even among the peasantry. The young farmer "*qui se fait brave*," is, in his own estimation, as attractive as any *merveilleux* of the *chausseté D'Antin* can suppose himself. His well-powdered head and massive queue, his round hat, drawn up at either side, "*pour faire le monsieur*," his large silver buckles, and large silver watch, with his smart white calico jacket and trowsers, present an excellent exhibition of rural coxcombrv, while the elders of the village set off their frieze coats with a fine flowered linen waistcoat, whose redundancy of flaps renders the texture of the nether part of their dress very unimportant.

But, however tasteless or coarse; however simple or grotesque, the costume of the French peasantry may appear to the stranger's eye, it still is a *costume*! It is a refinement on necessity, and not the mere and meagre covering of shivering nature. It is always one, among many evidences, that the people are not poor, are not uncivilized, that they require the decencies of life, and are competent to purchase them.—When an Irish peasant, with his usual shrewdness, endeavours to drive a hard bargain with his employer, his phrase is frequently: "*Sure, all I ask is just what will get me my bit and my rag*;" for all his ideas of dress consist in the words "*my rag*." These are painful references! they are perhaps too foreign, and too frequent; but they are irresistible! Oh! where is the land so distant, the region so remote, into which I may travel, and not bear Ireland in my memory, and her misery in my heart! And, oh! when shall the pen, now employed in tracing the prosperity and civilization of another country, be devoted to record the improvement, the tranquillity and happiness of my own! When shall it leave the fictions,

which have been made the medium for exhibiting the causes of her errors and her sufferings, to register the facts which shall prove, that the first are removed, and the last are forgotten !

* * * * *

On our way to France, we had taken a very circuitous route, and passed through a great part of England. We found the beautiful peasant population of that country, with its fair tranquil Saxon physiognomy, transparent complexion, and rounded muscle, a dangerous preparative for eyes destined to meet a people whose beauty can scarcely be reckoned among their national perfections. The French face, particularly among the lower orders, struck me forcibly, as having a general resemblance to the Tartar visage. The high but flattened cheek-bone, small eye, low forehead, with the close concentration of the features, formed a very prevalent cast of countenance, in such of the provinces as I visited. There are, however, even among the lowest classes, some very splendid exceptions to this general line of physiognomy, and I think the two handsomest men I ever saw, were a miller, near Amiens, and a workman, at the manufactory of porcelain at Chantilly, well known in his native town by the distinguishing appellation of "*le bel ouvrier*." It was in vain he showed us the *Majesty of France* smiling, with his "*sourire paternel*," on a tea cup ; or the royal dukes and dutchesses smirking in family amity, on a punch bowl. We still thought the workman superior to his work, and he indeed seemed perfectly of our opinion ; for no "*héros d'opéra*" ever played off the graces of attitude with a more studied or ridiculous effect, than did *le bel ouvrier de Chantilly*,

for the benefit and admiration of the English visitants of his manufactory.

The French physiognomy, however, varies almost in every province, and they themselves class the shades of beauty and ugliness with great precision, even in the neighbouring districts, by the terms "*beau sang*," and "*vilain sang*." This singular phraseology assimilates with what may be called the elegant slang of English *bon-ton*, which, by introducing the pedantry of the stable into the jargon of the drawing-room, enables the connoisseur in beauty and horse-flesh equally to compliment "Thunderbolt by Vixen, and Lady Virginia, descended from a Plantagenet dutchess, with the common declaration that they are both "thorough bred," and "show excellent blood."

In the *pays de Braine* the "*vilain sang*" is said to prevail; in its neighbouring district, la Perche, the "*beau sang*" is very distinguishable. In Normandy, the land of law and loveliness, the beauty of some of the women rivals the charms of the witches of Lancashire; and every where among the girls are to be met charming samples of "*la jolie*," that indefinite style of prettiness, which the French prefer to every other, and which, by them at least, is deemed "*plus belle que la beauté même*." The Bearnois, the native province of Henri IV. is celebrated for the beauty of its inhabitants, and particularly for the elegance, form, rapidity of motion, and grace of gesture of its Basques, a race of peasantry in one of its districts, whom it is the pride of the *Provençale noblesse* to bring into their family, as upper servants, and to exhibit in their salons, at Paris, as pages, dressed in their own original and beautiful costume.

I one day accompanied the Princess de Craon* to the hotel de Biron-Gonteau, and was in the formal act of presentation to the Dutchess de Biron, when a figure suddenly appeared in the garden pavilion in which we were received, which cut short my half-finished courtesy, and rendered even the amiable dutchess, with her historical name, an object, for the moment, of secondary consideration. While Madame de Biron was saying the most obliging things in the world, and in the most obliging manner, and while I, "nothing loth," lent "a pleased ear," my eyes pursued (though with some difficulty) the flitting motion of a light aërial figure, elegant and fanciful as the poet's image of "a feathered Mercury." This splendid apparition, in a costume singular and picturesque, passed through the pavilion into the garden. "*C'est le Basque de madame la duchesse, et dans le costume de son pays,*" said the Princess de Craon, observing the impression which this "fair page" had made on me.—"*Courir comme un Basque, est un proverbe de Provence,*" added the princess, "*et vous voyez, qu'il ne le dément pas.*" He was at that moment flitting among the trees of the garden, with the arrow-like swiftness attributed to the Hirkahs, or public messengers of Hindostan.

We afterwards adjourned to the terrace of the garden, which overlooked the boulevard Italien, through which the royal *cortége*, was passing (for it was the *entrée* of the young Dutchess de Berri, into Paris), and the Comte d'H—e, who accompanied us, took infinite pains to name to me the distinguished persons, who preceded,

* To this venerable and excellent lady, whose high birth is among the least of her merits, and indeed to almost every member of her illustrious family, I stand indebted for the most flattering attentions, and for much of the social pleasures I enjoyed, during my residence at Paris.

followed, and surrounded the *caleché* of the king, including the marshal Marmont, M. Talleyrand, Père Elisée, et *tutti quanti*. But still the beautiful Basque, and his beautiful costume, were to me objects of greater attraction than all the *grandeurs*, which followed in the suit of the royal bride.

She herself, I thought, looked pale and timid; and rather stunned than delighted by the loyal acclamations which rent the air from voices, which perhaps had recently given their "*vivas*" to a very different *entrée*;—while the countenance of the Dutchess d'Angoulême, more in distrust than in timidity, seemed such as she might have worn, when evincing her contempt of the national instability, to her cause, she boldly answered to the often prostituted "*nous jurons.*"—*Swear not, but obey.*" It was indeed a countenance more in anger, than in "sorrow" or in joy, and the very reverse of that of the "buried Majesty of Denmark:—"though that royal personage also evinced rather a "legitimate" taste for retribution, and was not averse to plunging his country in civil dissension, to avenge his own private wrongs, and satisfy his own private feelings.

If the peasantry of France are not all Basques, their defect of beauty does not arise from deficiency of nourishment; for I do not think I ever saw a greater number of persons, who seemed sent into the world, "*pour faire voir jusqu'où peut aller la peau humaine.*" "*Le bon gros père,*" "*la bonne grosse-mère,*" are epithets frequently used and justly applied, and the old philippics of *frogs* and *soupe-maigre* now fall hurtless against ribs, deep in their covering, as any of the best new light prizes exhibited at the Woburn shows. Among this order, indeed, Miss Prescott, the *Pythoiness* of English *embon-*

point, might acquire new hints for her science of *anti-phthisis*, and apply them for the benefit of meagre dowagers and attenuated young ladies, with successful effect.

The improved condition of the French peasantry has indeed operated with equal benefit, morally and physically. The destructions of the feudal system, with all its oppressive train of taxes and imposts, has produced a national regeneration. Even the despotic laws of the conscription, which peopled the armies of France by means even more odious than the press-gang system of England, has been counteracted in its effects, and repaired in its losses, by the ameliorated state of the people, by the division of the enormous landed properties, the equal participation in succession, and by the great encouragement given to the progress of vaccine inoculation.*

In 1781, the *contrôleur-général* of France, under Louis XVI. *Monsieur Joli de Fleuri*, defined "the people" of France to be "*peuple serf, corvéable, et taillable, à merci et miséricorde.*" It was the misery of this "*peuple serf,*" that urged the cause of the revolution; it was this "*peuple corvéable et taillable, à merci et miséricorde,*" who showed no mercy for their heartless oppress-

* The French army was essentially national, since by the law of the conscription it was composed of all the citizens, without distinction of class. This was the secret which filled up the fallen ranks of the French legions, and which reconciled the lower classes so patiently to its infliction. It was on the higher classes it fell with the greatest severity, if indeed the gentry of France ever had any profession but that of arms, or any object of ambition but military glory. I asked the wife of a farmer in the Isle of France, who had lost a son by the conscription, whether she did not rejoice in the downfall of him, who had instituted that despotic law? "*Pour celui,*" she replied, "*il nous a fait trop de mal, pour que nous disions du bien de lui; mais il nous a fait trop de bien, pour que nous en disions du mal.*"—And this, I believe, is the sentiment of the nation.

ers. It was this race of slaves, degraded, trodden on, broken down, strangers to liberty, to morals, and to religion, who were urged to commit those horrors, for which they are so unjustly upbraided, and whose national mildness and natural goodness of disposition might well yield to the temptation of satisfying a vengeance, which the wrongs and slavery of ages had ripened, nourished, and fomented into madness.

But that long-enduring race have now passed away; their children are proprietors where they were vassals. The torture no longer exists, to feed a spirit of brutal ferocity by its horrible exhibitions. Bigotry no longer presents to them, with the same effect, idle forms for real principles; they have nothing to fear from the "*droit de chasse*," the "*corvée*," the "*taille*," the "*gabelle*." They have tasted a practical freedom, not less perhaps than that enjoyed by the people of England; they are moral as the people of Scotland; and notwithstanding the recent ravages, they are more prosperous perhaps than either. Oh! may they long continue so; and in spite of that "*sourge of fire*,"* with which an

* I copy here a paragraph from a letter, which I have this day received (December 29th, 1816) from Paris, from a gentleman of considerable talent and experience, in the present state of things in France, "*Votre Canning a tenu ici des propos d'un ton, qui n'étoit pas propre à rapprocher les deux nations, et qui sont bien inconsiderés pour un homme d'état. Il dit, il-y-a quelque tems, dans un cercle nombreux, où étoient beaucoup de militaires nouveaux, que le gouvernement des Bourbons étoit trop doux pour une nation, aussi turbulente et aussi factieuse que la nôtre. Mais que l'Angleterre se chargeoit de nous tenir sous une verge de feu! Les militaires n'ont rien dit, et Mad. de Stael s'est chargée seule de répondre à ces insolences.*"

"Comme M. Canning parloit des victoires, que les Anglais avoient remportées, elle lui dit, que si ces messieurs vouloient une seule fois se détacher des Russes, des Prussiens, des Allemands, &c. &c. &c. et nous

English minister is said lately to have threatened them, may they boldly resent and timely oppose every effort made by domestic oppression or foreign invasion, which may tend to bring them back to that state in which they were declared, by the law of the land, to be "*un peuple serf, corvéable et taillable, à merci et à miséricorde !*"

honorer d'une tête-à-tête, elle lui promettoit de n'être pas refusé !" "No-tre Canning" made himself extremely popular among the *royalistes enragés*, when I was in France, by his speech at Bourdeaux, in which he called that loyal city "le temple de Madame." For many evenings successively I never entered any of the salons of my royalist friends, that this "*mot de sentiment*" was not echoed about in all sorts of maudlin, whining tones—" *Le temple de Madame !! Ah que c'est joli ! Le T-emp-ple de Madame ! Mais c'est charmant, c'est beau.*"

" *On voit bien, madame,*" said a royalist to me, who had repeated this *mot de sentiment* upon every change and key of the sentimental gamut, " *on voit bien, madame, que votre Canning est un homme à sentiment, avec infiniment d'esprit ! Le temple de Madame ! Ah que c'est beau !*"

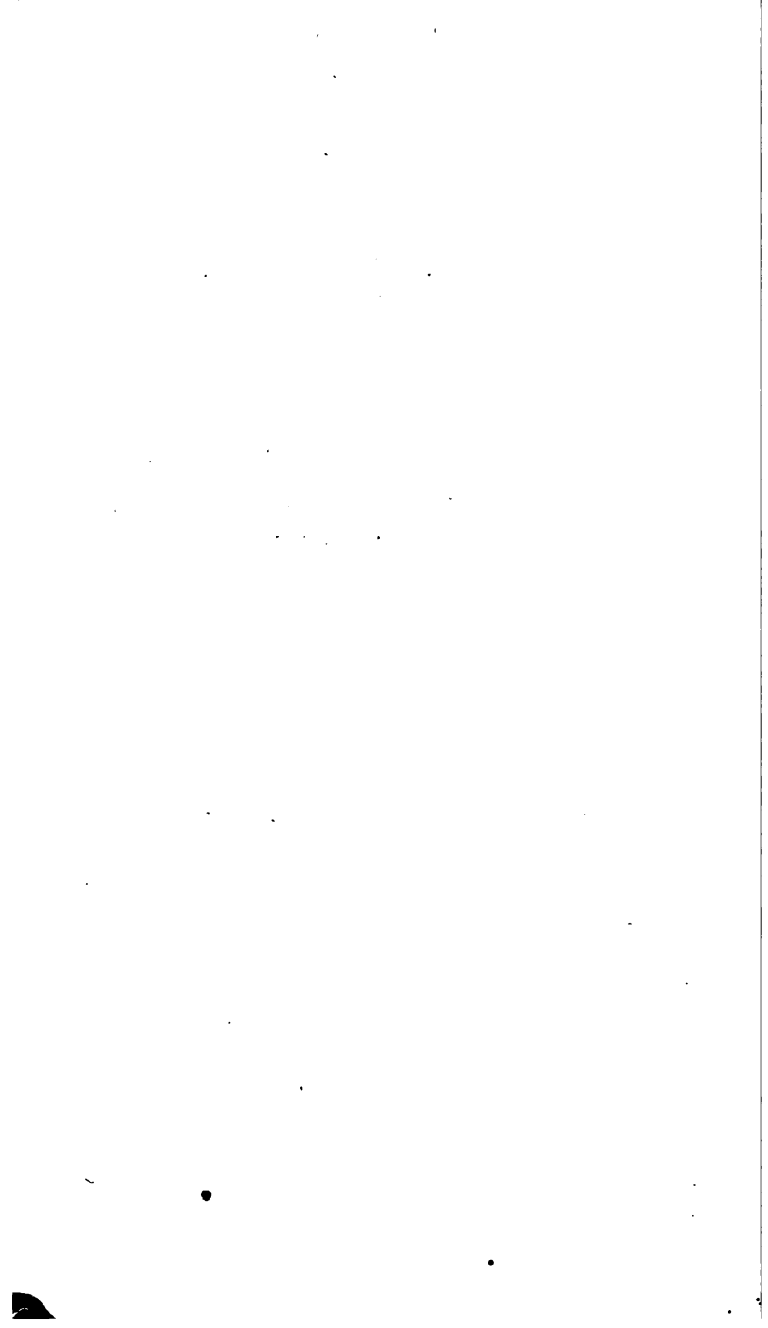
FRANCE.

BOOK II.



SOCIETY.

"A mesure que la philosophie fait des progrès, la sottise redouble les efforts pour établir l'empire des préjugés."



FRANCE.

BOOK II.

SOCIETY.

National Characteristics.—Sketch of Manners before the Revolution.—During the Revolution.—Under the Imperial Government.—Actual State of Society and Manners, in France.—“The Children of the Revolution.”—Royalists.—Ultra-Royalists.—Constitutionalists, and Buonapartists.—Conversation.—Raconteurs.—Political Vaudevilles.—Tone of the Circles.—French Youth.—The Elève of the Polytechnic School.—Religious Institutions.—School of Ecouen.

NATIONAL idiosyncrasy must always receive its first colouring from the influence of soil and of climate; and the moral characteristics of every people be resolvable into the peculiar constitution of their physical structure. Religion and government, indeed, give a powerful direction to the principles and modes of civilized society, and debase or elevate its inherent qualities, by the excellence or defect of their own institutes. But the complexional features of the race remain fixed and unchanged, the original impression of nature is never effaced.

The portrait drawn of the ancient Gauls, by Cæsar, preserves its resemblance to the French of the present day, notwithstanding the various grafts that have been inserted into the national stock. And Agathias and Machiavel have nearly given the same sketch of the same originals, at periods of very remote distance, and with views of very different tendency. Susceptible and ardent, impetuous and fierce, the most civilized of all the barbarians, whom Rome subjected to her yoke, are still the most polished people of Europe; and the French, through all the vicissitudes of their political fortunes, through all the horrors of the most sanguinary epoch of their revolution, have exhibited that inherent tendency to social attachment, that capability of generous devotion, and that fund of *bon-homme* (to use a word of their own creation, for a feeling peculiar to themselves), which evince that the worst form of religion and government could not destroy the happy elements of character, out of which such kindly dispositions arose. The atrocities, which stained the most unfortunate æra of the revolution, were almost redeemed by the constitutional virtues, which exhibited themselves during its progress. Condorcet, condemned to death, yet refusing the asylum which friendship risked itself to offer him, is but one out of a thousand examples of noble disinterestedness and heroic devotion.*

* "Condorcet, pursued by the terrorists, received an offer of protection and concealment from a female friend: he peremptorily refused this generous offer, exclaiming, "*Vous seriez hors la loi!*" "*Eh! suis-je hors l'humanité?*" was her answer. This heroic reply did not prevail upon the unfortunate fugitive: he fled from the asylum of the friend, whose safety was more precious than his own, and survived but a few days.

When humanity snatched one breathing moment from blood and terror, to bestow it on social intercourse; when all the quarters of Paris gave that well-remembered civic dinner in the public streets, to which all were bidden, and to which all were welcomed; the tide of social affection, long frozen in its channels, suddenly dissolved, and flowed in its wonted genial current. The impulses of joy were universal; strangers rushed into each other's arms; friends, long severed, clung in close embrace; and the sanguinary tyrant of the hour saw, in this sudden burst of friendly communication, the revival of the national "*bon-homme*," and the downfall of his own power. A decree was issued against the recurrence of such festivals of the heart; but it was published too late: the avenues of social feeling were again opened, and the *civic dinner* was the *passover* of an emancipated people.

The frightful system of despotism, laid by the ferocious tyranny of Louis XI. and accomplished by the ambition and pride of Louis XIV. produced an obvious and fatal influence on the character of the nation. The independence of the nobility, which bent before the open force and direct hostility of the barbarian king, moulded into irretrievable ruin before the enfeebling corruption of the more accomplished despot. Against this prime destroyer of the liberties and morals of his devoted people, History appeals to posterity; for the contemporary chroniclers, who undertook their task at royal command, and stained her page in time-serving obsequiousness to the vanity of their employer, were insensible to the national degradation they recorded. When Boileau and Racine recited to the monarch, and to his mistresses, the glories, pomp, and power of his

reign,* these courtly poets, but feeble historians, felt not that the annals which flattered the pride of the vain-glorious king, condemned the despot of a ruined people to immortal ignominy. The unprofitable wars, by which the insatiate ambition of Louis XIV. endeavoured to extend his dominion; the lavish expenditure of incalculable treasures, dissipated in idle amusements, or squandered on gorgeous palaces, left his people beggared, and his finance exhausted. His despotic supremacy suffered no trace of political liberty to exist; and the fatal example of his own private life spread the dire contagion of vice and of hypocrisy through every class, and opened the gates of systematic depravity to his successors, which never closed, till the whole temple of corruption was

“hurled headlong,

With hideous ruin, and combustion, down.”

In the history of civilized society there is, perhaps, no parallel for the moral degradation which enveloped France, during the whole of the eighteenth century. It was a demoralization so perfect, so unrestrained, and finally so unconsciously subsisting, sapping, corrupting, gangrening every social and moral relation of life, that towards the end of the long reign of Louis XV. scarcely

* After a dangerous illness, the king permitted Boileau and Racine to amuse him by reading aloud some pages of the history of his reign, which Mad. de Montespan had engaged them to write. The king heard them, seated between his two mistresses; the one in the height of her power, the other in her wane. To account for the distinction thus conferred upon his ex-favourite, Louis said; “*Il est bien juste, madame, que vous assistiez à la lecture d'un ouvrage, dont vous même avez tracé le plan.*” The history of Lewis le Grand, commanded by himself, planned by his mistresses, and executed by two pensioned poets!!! What a combination! Buonaparte, speaking of Louis XIV. said, *C'était un pauvre homme; — s'il existait, je n'en voudrais pas pour mon aid-de-camp.*”

one tie, that binds man to man, remained unbroken or undefiled : all was pollution, or degradation, political profligacy, or moral delinquency. Fiction and fact, history and romance, all that described, and all that imitated the morals and manners of these days, reflect their disgusting details with frightful fidelity. It is the illustrious Bussys* and St. Simons who attests the enormities they so gaily picture. It is the high-born Richelieu, who has immortalized the depravity of that elevated class, whose vices are found epitomized in his own history of his own life. From the careless and spirited details of the brilliant de Sevigné, down to the imitative and ingenious fictions of the Marivaux, Crebillons, Louvets, and the Duclos, a code of corruption might be drawn, so perfect in vice, so matchless in crime, that not the hardiest champion of the "*bon vieux tems*" would dare to defend it, or could refrain from astonishment, that "*such things could be,*"

" And overcome him, like a summer's cloud,
Without his special wonder !"

When the measure of political abuse was filled to overflowing ; when not a ray of freedom was left to the people, not a shadow of representation to the nobility ; when venality stalked forth in the stole of sanctity, and simony held an open market ; when privileges were substituted for rights, and influence usurped the

* Comte de Bussy Rabutin, author of "*Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules*," and of "*Mémoires*." It is curious to observe, that the intimate and most admired friend of the amiable Mad. de Sevigné was M. Pomenars, a noted coiner, though a man of rank. He was repeatedly tried for his life ; and Mad. de Sevigné frankly declares her belief, that he was guilty of every crime, but poisoning."

forms of legitimate power; when exaction and oppression went hand in hand through every enormity, and the poison of moral corruption had worked its leaven through the whole mass; then the bond of society was rent asunder; and the great and final *bouleversement*, which followed, was only proportionate, in its progress and effects, to its origin and causes. The first explosion, bold, brilliant, and aspiring, as the ascending fires of pyrotechny, was followed by the admiration, and consecrated by the vows of all that was enlightened and liberal in Europe. Even royalty watched its commencement without fear, as its light pierced the gloom of the dungeon, and brightened the mansions of living sepulture; and philosophy gloried in its career, as she beheld the darkness of prejudice dissipated by its blaze, and the frightful edifice of despotism sink under its influence.

But, though the revolution was an event devoutly wished by the liberal, and ardently forwarded by the wise, though all the talent and all the genius of the nation concurred in

“ Mutual league,
United thoughts and counsel, equal hope,
And hazard in the glorious enterprize,”

they could but direct its spirit, and guide its views. It was the physical force of the nation, which could alone carry the design into effect. It was the collected mass of the most political degraded people in Europe, which was to bear it on; and the cause of freedom was inevitably committed into the hands of slaves. It was to no race like the Myrmidons of Achilles, swarming forth, and changing their species, that the work of devastation was consigned. Those who gave the revolution its san-

guinary character were no miraculous progeny, no spontaneous product of the new order of things, but the home-bred children of despotism, who, like the "yelling monsters" of Milton's Sin, turned against their mother, and

"Howl'd, and gnaw'd her bowels, their repast."

Familiar with sights of blood, to which the public executions had inured them,* their own wild deeds were governed by their horrible experience. Sympathy long deadened, and sensibility long blunted, by the very nature of their institutions, they had now none left to exercise or to bestow on those who had thus degraded them. It was these long passive and thoroughly debased subjects of abused authority, who, creeping from their dens, shadowed by the Bastile, followed in the train of their tiger-leaders; who, glutted with blood, yet thirsting for carnage, taught the dreadful lesson, that those only who are educated in liberty, are capable of forwarding her cause; who evinced that many revolutions must occur, and many systems of government arise and fall, ere the stain of vassalage can be effaced; ere the mark of the chain can be worn from the neck of the captive, and the freeman forget that he had once been a slave!

* In the history of human cruelty there was nothing so atrocious as the criminal punishments of France. Mad. de Sevigné mentions, in the course of her letters, above fifty persons broken alive on the wheel, and two ladies burned by a slow fire; of whom, one was accused of sorcery. Damien and Ravillac were torn to pieces by horses, after tortures the most horrible: "the question," or torture, was a thing of every-day occurrence.

As it is the fashion of the day purposely to mistake constitutional principles, for democratic speculations, so it is its policy to revive and bring forward the horrors of the revolution, as "bug-bears dressed to frighten children," into all that can be imposed or inflicted. Images of long-passed crimes are conjured up, to spread terror, to awaken indignation, to increase prejudice, and to render the people of two great nations the victims of the old state policy of "divide and govern." But it should be remembered, that the generation which perpetrated these atrocities, were the legitimate subjects of legitimate monarchs, and were stamped with the character of the government, which produced them. The race, however, have long passed away, which immolated, on the same altar, plebeian worth and royal virtue; who included in the same mighty hecatomb the champions of loyalty and the advocates of freedom, the La Tremouilles and La Rochefoucaulds, with the Rolands and the Condorcets, all that was precious in the annals of ancient chivalry, with all that was distinguished in the records of modern philosophy. Mature in life, when the scene of their iniquities opened upon this "horrid crew," it soon closed upon their guilt; and the Marats, the Dantons, and the Robespierres, who belonged equally to the order of things which preceded the revolution, and to that, which filled up the most frightful of its epochs, can never re-appear, unless a similar corruption in the government, and an equal degradation in the nation, shall prove again the inevitable connexion between oppression, in the ruler, and worthlessness, in the people.

The nobility of France, including all the higher classes of society, are distinguished, in the early annals of

their country, by a boldness and an energy of character, which not even the iron cages and loathsome dungeons of their determined foe, Louis XI. could subdue. But what his oppression could not effect, the vicious court and corrupting despotism of Louis XIV. accomplished. In the whining sycophants, who shed tears when the monarch frowned ;* who canvassed the honour of becoming *the husband of his mistress*, or of yielding up their daughters to royal concubinage, it is difficult to trace the ancient baronical independence, the high sense of honour, which produced the *Guesclins* and the *Bayards* of earlier days.—Amidst the orange groves and luxurious pavillions of Versailles, among priests and parasites, in childish amusements and in womanish gossip, expired that once brilliant spirit, which gave to the French cavalier his peculiar tone of gallant intrepidity. , The energy and vivacity, distinguishable through the political and religious struggles of the League, were no more, and that careless desparation, which induced the chiefs of the Fronde to embark in a cause, scarcely understood, to please a beauty scarcely known,

“ de faire la guerre aux rois,”

or,

“ de faire la guerre aux dieux,”

this bright ethereal spark of national fire was exchanged for a flame, cold and putrescent as the marshy exhalation,

* Even “ *le vertueux Pomponne*” is described as weeping, when the king reproved him ; and Monsieur *kneels at the feet* of his royal brother to thank him for a favour conferred on one of his friends. Mad. de Maintenon’s own picture of this “ *cour inique*,” as she calls it, is curious : “ *Nous y voyons des envies, sans sujet, des rages, des trahisons, sans ressentiment, des bassesses qu’on couvre du nom de grandeur d’âme.*”

tion, and fit only to light the idolatrous altars, raised by a parasite aristocracy, to the worship of a vain-glorious monarch.—The groupe of slaves, which the flattery of the sculptor has placed at the feet of the most gorgeous statue of the most gorgeous of kings, aptly images the higher classes of society, by which he was surrounded.*

The courtiers of Louis XV. not less feeble and more depraved, not less abject and more vicious, resolved all human dignity into the maxim of "*représenter noblement*." How possible it was to *représenter noblement*, without one noble principle or manly virtue, the innumerable memoirs of the innumerable "gay Lotharios" of those days of egotism and vanity best evince.

The transition from the finical refinements and solemn puerilities of this age of dramatic representation, to the bold, coarse, republican tone of revolutionary manners, was singularly rapid, and curiously contrasted. To the *ennui*, exhaustion, and inanity, which characterized the insipid circles of a worn-out race, succeeded an exaltation of head and a glow of heart, productive sometimes of the noblest, sometimes of the most tragical, and sometimes of the most ludicrous effects. The self-immolation of Charlotte Corday, the dauntless heroism of Madame Roland, belong to the best æra of Roman patriotism. The avengeful feelings, which rose almost beyond the tone of human vindictiveness, pursuing the dying moments of Robespierre, "breathe a browner horror" over deeds of darkness,

* When this famous statue of Louis XIV. was thrown down in 1792, the name of the celebrated artist, Girardon, was found written on one of the feet of the horse. Chamfort rather harshly defines this *humility* to be "*la modeste bêtise d'un homme de génie, qui se croit honoré de travailler à la gloire d'un tyran.*"

than the deepest shades of tragic fiction* have ever reached; and there is nothing broader in farce, than the vicissitudes of the Abon Hassans of the early part of the revolution; when the "rabble rout" of Porte St. Antoine assumed the *toga* of *Patrician dignity*; when Caius Marius, the cobbler, discussed the rights of the people, under the domes of the Capets, and Cornelia, the fishwoman, distributed black bread to her ragged *marmotes*, with the conscious feelings of the mother of the Gracchi. It was during these national Saturnalia, that the Rochefoucaulds, the Talleyrands, the Mirabeaus, became immersed in the mud they had raked up from the "*lie du people*;" and now suing those, so lately the slaves of their legitimate power, humbly craved "the most sweet voices" of the swinish multitude, who thus

"Prank'd it in authority, against all noble sufferance."

* When Robespierre stood upon the steps of the tribunal, vainly appealing to a people over whose passions he had now lost all influence (for his last hour was come), a spectral figure, tall, gaunt, and fearful, which had for some time moved closely beside him, now continued to murmur at intervals in his ear, in a hollow and monotonous tone, "*tu n'es plus rien, tyran; l'échafaud t'attend.*" Robespierre in vain endeavoured to frown away this evil genius—his frown had lost its terror, and his voice its command.

Another instance of *poetical justice* attended the death of this sanguinary monster, which marked the frightful vengeance of the times. When his hand missed its aim, and he shot himself through the jaw instead of through the brain, he was carried to the *hôtel de ville*, and laid upon the council-table, from which so many of his horrid decrees had issued. A woman, who had walked close beside the bier on which he was carried, with a countenance of fixed despair, took her station at his head, and gazed on his mangled form with looks of unglutted vengeance, for he had been the murderer of her son. In the agonies of a burning thirst, he called for something to drink "*Bois ton sang,*" she replied, pressing his hand, "*tyran, tu as toujours aimé le sang.*"

In this moment of general subversion, all was transition the most violent, and extremes the most opposite; evincing a people from whom all principles had long been withheld, by arbitrary power; and who, when released from its restraints, became the slaves of their own unbridled and ill-directed will. Trifles the most puerile, with events the most important, equally occupied the public mind; and while the government was daily changing its forms and its chiefs, objects the most insignificant became enveloped in the universal transmutation. Streets changed their names, hotels their distinctions, rooms their furniture. The *place Louis Quinze* became the "*place de la Révolution*." Where the Sevignés and the Richelieus presided over the elegant circles of their day, the *Montagnards* now howled, or the *Chouans* vociferated; and Brissot and Condorcet opposed to the wild inspirations of vulgar anarchy, the bold, fearless eloquence of patriotism and genius, where, happily, Voiture had once recited his insipid verses to applauding dutchesses, when the "*Guirlande de Julie*" was deemed the *passé-outré* of the intellect of the nation.

All the lumber of aristocracy, material and immaterial, was placed under the ban of popular aversion; and the *armoires* of Boule, and the tapestry of the Gobelins, submitted alike to revolutionary rage, with the fortunes and the lives of their noble owners. While the time-honoured *bergère* drew down the imputation of bad citizenship, the "*divin tabouret*" was a sure stepping-stone "*à la lanterne*"—Josses and buffets gave way to Etruscan vases, and antique tripods, and the venerable "*canapé*," denounced and proscribed, yielded to the usurpation of couches, which Praxiteles might have designed for the

apartments of Aspasia—Even the splendid *pendules*, which had presided in the royal palaces over hours

"That danced away with down upon their feet,"

submitted to the common fate; and while the time-pieces of Versailles and St. Cloud were sold for old brass, Flavius, the hair-dresser, consulted his sun-dial, and asked of Memmius, the cast-clothes' man,

"I prithee, citizen, what shadow of the day is it?"

Religion too, still struggling for her supremacy under any name or form, adopted "the changeful fashions of the day."—*Heathen altars* rose, where holy *reposoirs* had once held their stations; the scite of mythological rites, long consecrated to Christian devotion, again resumed its original name and purpose; and the venerable church of the thrice-blessed *St. G  n  vieve* became the "*temple of all the gods.*"

But, while the people and their demagogue-leaders thus evinced the inherent frivolity of a long-degenerating people; while modes and manners rapidly changed their form and colouring, with successive constitutions; the principle of regeneration was still slowly working out its way, through the tissue of folly and ferocity that opposed it. The public spirit and good sense of the nation, its genius, and its patriotism, under the names of Federalists, Brissotins, or Girondins, stood opposed alike to the bad taste and bad feeling of a wild democracy, which had ranged itself under the protection of the deities of Olympus. The regime of terrorism threw a *mauvaise odeur* over the republican jargon of the modern BRUTI, and the tone of society, during the reign of the Directory, stood much less indebted to the getting-

up of articles from the classical dictionary, than any which had been adopted since the first æra of the revolution.

While, however, manners were tinctured with all the exaggerated feelings of the day, and partook of that ridicule, to which all exaggerated feeling is liable, the nation was making a silent but sensible progress in morals and illumination. Mothers now gloried, or affected to glory, in that sacred name; infancy no longer drew its sustenance from a hireling bosom; nor was childhood bereft of all the endearments of home, or driven from the enjoyment of domestic affection to the chilling cells of a convent, and the cold attentions of purchased care. Daughters became members of their own families; sons were taught by their fathers that they had a country; and Nature, righting herself even amidst the outrages committed on her, obtained an influence over the feelings and actions of society, to which, in France, she had long been a stranger.

It was at this period that a series of glorious conquests abroad, and an anarchial struggle for power, at home, called forth a new arrangement in the government of the state. The people were worn out by a rapid succession of constitutions, which had as yet produced little tangible good, and taken no permanent form. They sought a chief, whose influence might compose the still fermenting mass of public opinion, and throw the tie of unity over contending factions. Military glory, "which grew with what it fed on," had become the object of national enthusiasm; and the people, like the friends of Coriolanus, deeming, that

———"Valour was the chiefest virtue,
And did most dignify the wearer,"

whose for their ruler the greatest captain of the age, and placed *him* by acclamation on the throne of France, who had already laid the thrones of continental Europe at her feet.*

Napoleon Buonaparte, elected Emperor of the French, preserved unsullied, during the first period of his reign, the popularity, which had given birth to his elevation. Personal merit had now reached its just standard of appreciation in a country, where all factitious distinctions had long been reduced to their intrinsic value ; and talent, still holding its supremacy, became the passport to imperial protection. The arts and sciences rallied round the throne of him, whose conquests had so considerably extended their resources,† and whose liberality had lavished such munificent rewards on their numerous professors. Hereditary rank came forth from its ruined towers, to hail the founder of a new dynasty, who promised remuneration, for a portion at least, of what the revolution had confiscated. The descendants of the ancient

* "My brother," said Lucien Buonaparte, "is the most *legitimate monarch* in Europe ; for he is the only one chosen by the voice of the people."

Buonaparte had indeed made himself popular by many little acts of generosity and *bon-homme* which, in whatever cause they originated, had their effect on the army and the lower classes. After the battle of Arcola, he was walking alone through the camp at night, when he perceived a sentinel asleep upon his arms. He took his fusée gently from him, and placing him on the ground, kept watch on his post for nearly two hours. The soldier at last awoke, and perceiving an officer doing his duty was panic-struck ; but when the next moment he discovered that this officer was the COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, he exclaimed, in a tone of despair: "*Buonaparte! Je suis perdu.*" Buonaparte returning him his arms, simply observed, "*après tant de fatigues, il est permis à un brave, comme toi, de s'endormir ; mais une autre fois prends mieux ton tems.*"

† Buonaparte expended thirty millions of francs on objects of art and antiquities, besides those he obtained by conquest.

defenders of the good kings Raoul and Hugh Capet, lent their time-consecrated support to a fourth race, as their ancestors had struggled for, and crowned, a second and a third. Many of the most ancient nobility of France had remained in the country, and weathered the storms of its successive revolutions : and the Rohans, the Mortimarts, the La Rochefoucaulds, the Beauveaus, the Praslins, the Biron, the Brissacs, the Montmorencis, the Talleyrands ; in a word, the most illustrious names in the historical annals of the nation, filled the anti-chamber, or assisted in the councils of a chief, who courted their representatives with deference, received them with kindness, and loaded them with honours.

Every day some erasure was made from the list of emigrant proscription ;* the descendants of the "*menins*"† to the "*monsieurs*" of feebler days, became the *friends* of the reigning sovereign ; and the "*guidons* of the royal lily"‡ ranged themselves under the standard of the imperial eagle. All factions were now blended in one ; and it was reserved for this singular founder of his own fortunes to cement and establish his power, by operating a fusion of all parties in his own favour, thus presenting, in the first and wisest æra of his reign, a combi-

* Napoleon was so anxious to have the ancient nobility about his person, that he left no means untried to bring them over. One day he erased the names of so many emigrants from the list of proscription, that his minister remarked, "*Comment donc, Sire, vous allez rayer le Comte d'Artois, et son frère ?*" To which he replied, "*Et pourquoi non ? Est-ce qu'ils ont porté les armes ?*"

† The *menins*, or *minions* of the dauphins of France, were ten young gentlemen kept about his person to dissipate his *amui*. They had six thousand livres pension, "*pour être assidus auprès du dauphin*."

‡ See the Marquis de Sevigné's complaints at remaining a *guidon*, at the age of forty.

nation of talents, feelings, and principles, which had long been given to the support of opposite and contending systems. The leaders of the several former constitutions now joined in upholding one, and preserved the recollection of their ancient feuds no further, than to lament that they ever existed.

It was a dogma in the new political creed of Napoleon, that the ancient noblesse of the country, though essentially allied to the fallen dynasty, might be rendered an equally firm and brilliant support to his own; and while a sort of romantic passion for historical names* abetted the policy, which led him to re-establish the families which bore them, the descendants of the ancient barons of France were nothing loth to receive new dignities, and the immense revenues that were given in lieu of their ancient possessions, even from the hands of a *parvenu* sovereign. "It is astonishing," said M. de Talleyrand, "how many emigrant ladies, of the old court, wish me to force them to become *dames d'honneur*, in the new." And it is a well known fact, that many of the *ci-devant* "*ducs et pairs*," who now talk in raptures of the "*ineffable félicité dont jouissèrent leur pères, sous la paisible durée de l'empire héréditaire*," were then proud to display their grand chambellan's ribbon, in the imperial anti-room; and courted smiles and accepted favours from the munificence of him, whom they now

* Napoleon was very proud of being *gentil-homme*. One day, at Vienna, the Emperor of Austria, in reply to his boast on this head, observed that he had seen in the imperial library an old account of the Buonaparte family. Napoleon eagerly begged the volume as a present from his father-in-law, who answered, drily, that it had been taken from the library, during the occupation of Vienna by the French.

contemptuously mention, in the presence of legitimacy, by the epithet of the usurper!

Amongst the ancient nobility, however, Napoleon had many personal friends, who justify their allegiance to him by arguments difficult to refute.* They did not give up their hereditary princes, till all Europe had likewise abandoned them; till Russia, Prussia, Austria, Spain, nearly all the *legitimate* authorities of the continent, had *deserted the cause of legitimacy*. When these potentates had acknowledged the power which the French nation had chosen for itself, the Bourbons became in France what the Stuarts had been in England; and all that it had once been virtue to uphold, it then became treason to defend. With such sanction for their tergiversation, the nobility felt at that period, with the rest of the nation, that he, round whom they rallied,

“ More worthy interest had done the state,
“ Than those the shadows of succession.”

The court of the new Charlemagne, filled with the descendants of Preux and Paladins, assumed a character of Gothic grandeur, wholly destructive to that tone of republican simplicity, which *Brutus* Buonaparte had once contributed to establish.† The house of brick became

* Buonaparte's preference of the old nobility went so far, that he ordered the *prefets* to give the “*petites magistratures du village*” to the poorer gentlemen, for whom no better employments could be made out. This preference was regarded with great jealousy by the rest of the nation, with whom it had long been resolved into a maxim, that all the citizens should be the “*enfants de leurs actions* ;” and in whose eyes all who served the state were equally noble.

† Buonaparte and Casti, the author of “*gli animali parlanti*,” had been known to each other during the fervor of the revolutionary times.

a palace of marble. The fairy splendours of the Caliph Aaron-al-Raschid were united to the sombre magnificence of the middle ages. The stately formalities of the Escorial presided over the circles of the Thuilleries ; and the costumes of the Valois and the Medici fell in heavy folds over forms, which had long exhibited their symmetry in the adhesive drapery of Grecian sculpture.* Even the old stage properties of royal legitimacy came forward, on the scene of imperial representation ; and the decorations of the legion of honour were distributed from the casque of Guesclin and the helmet of Bayard ; while the chair of Dagobert was furbished up to receive the representative of the western-emperors, and the iron crown of Lombardy was cleaned and polished, to encircle the brows of a new king of Italy, the successor of the Cæsars.

The *fastes* of France now rivalled those of ancient Rome, in its most splendid days. The government, once defined to be a despotism, "*tempéré par une chanson,*" was now a despotism, veiled in a *halo* of splendour. The riches of Europe were poured into the coffers of the state : potentates were visitants or prisoners in the palaces of its capital, and their territories were included within the boundaries of its dominion. Works of Roman magnitude, beauty, and utility, arose on every side : all that was mean was removed ; all that was noble was revived ; all that wore the air of improvement

When Casti was afterwards presented at the imperial court, the Emperor addressed him with "*Eh bien, Signor Casti, êtes-vous toujours démocrate ?*" "*Plus que jamais, Sire,*" replied the poet. "*Je vois que les grands hommes débutent par là*"

* The costumes of the two Medicis were assumed by the empresses, at their coronation.

received the sanction of authority ; and society, taking its tone from the colossal grandeur of the government, was massive in its forms, splendid in its draperies, energetic in its spirit, and brilliant in its details. The insipidity of the "good old times," and the ferocity of the revolutionary days, were alike denounced by the reigning *bon-ton* ; "and *les Muses et les Graces*," with their old *cortége* "*les Ris et les amours*," were dismissed in company with the phrases and figures of rhetorick, the tropes and images of jacobin oratory.

The character of the nation seemed to assimilate itself to that of the chief ; and its inherent activity, taking a high direction, was no longer diverted by enfeebling institutes to insignificant objects, nor worked upon by temporary exaltations to frenzied violence. The public deportment and occupied life of the emperor, put the exhibition of vice and the appearance of idleness out of fashion. There were no mistresses of state ;* no Pompadour or du Barré to give royal sanction to private profligacy, and to convert female caprices into reasons of state. No games† were played at court, which in the city were prohibited under pain of death. No elegant swindlers, like the Pomenars and the Grammonts,‡

* Whatever might have been the irregularities of the man, they made no part of the parade of the sovereign—A *petite pièce*, by Etienne was represented at the theatre of the Thuilleries, in which it was said, that "the ladies of the court made colonels in the army." The emperor, who was present, showed evident signs of disapprobation ; and as he passed through the apartments of the palace, where the ladies in waiting were at cards, he stopped, and said to some of them, from whom I had the anecdote, "*Eh bien, mesdames ? est-ce vous donc, qui faites les colonels ? Voilà ce que je n'avois jamais soupçonné.*"

† "*Hocca.*" See Mad. de Sevigné's Letters.

‡ It was the Comte de Grammont himself, who sold for fifteen hundred livres his own manuscript memoirs, in which he is painted as an

played off their *fourberies* with their jokes, nor exhibited their dexterity and their wit, at the expense of their honour and their characters. So little were the pleasures of the table appreciated by him, who seemed to make all pleasures subservient to his ambition, that the gastronomic science fell into disrepute, with the other revolutionary tastes; and the *chefs de cuisine* might have meditated a conspiracy against the contemner of their art, if Cambaceres and his "*camarades de mangerie*" had not kept alive their hopes until the return of those times, in which, as the *Duc de D——s* lately expressed it, "*la majesté du trône est placée dans la cuisine.*"*

The society of Paris had now wholly changed its classification with its tone. It was no longer composed of "*Modérés*" and "*Montagnards*," of jacobin chiefs and republican leaders. These "rough-headed kerns," in the costume of *brigandage*; no longer swarmed in dusky groups in the salons, nor filled the public places with their ruffian figures; but they were replaced by a circle of popes, and kings, and potentates, and princes, *en grande costume*, and habits of ceremony.

accomplished swindler. Fontenelle, the censor of the work, refused to approve it, out of feelings of regard to the noble family de Grammont. The count complained of this to the chancellor, to whom Fontenelle explained his reasons. De Grammont, however, would not lose his fifteen hundred livres, and obliged Fontenelle to approve the amusing memoirs of his own *fourberies*, rendered immortal by the wit and talents of his kinsman, Anthony Hamilton Pomenars, the intimate friend and guest of Mad. de Sevigné, was repeatedly tried for his life, as a *coiner*, and having defeated the law, paid his lawyer with his own false money.

* Napoleon was temperate, even to abstemiousness, at table, and has been known to rise from it the moment he had dined without regard to the unsatisfied appetites of the company, who, by etiquette were obliged to leave the table when he retired.

Where the humble fiacre was once forbidden to roll, by republican severity, the equipages of foreign sovereigns now "stopped the way,"* and "*monsieur le cocher, si votre maître n'est pas Roi vous n'y passerez pas,*" was a common denunciation from the sentinel, who guarded the avenues of the opera; where kings assembled as familiarly and numerous, as at the *table d'hôte* of the adventurous Candide.†

"*Ne prévoyez-vous pas que j'aurais bientôt trois ou quatre rois sur le bras?*" was the reply of Lucien Buonaparte to a friend who reproached him with his economy. And "*il est passé roi*" was the military cant of the soldiers, when Bernadotte retired from the army; just as "*il est passé sergent*" was applied to a comrade, who had arrived at the dignity of the halbert. To be made a king, was, indeed, a sort of respectable retreat‡ for a marshal; and the sceptre was no unfrequent expectation for those who had wielded the *bâton* with credit and utility.

When James of England sought an asylum at the court of France, the poets of the day sung it as an event of glory in the annals of the nation.

"Et la cour de Louis est l'asyle des rois,"

was a boast re-echoed with pride. But it was reserved for the Emperor of France to sit covered in a congress

* At one period of the revolution, to be seen in a carriage was to be suspected of royalism. Even hackney coaches did not ply.

† The house-maid of our hotel observed, in its commendation, that "when the kings and princes used to visit Paris, we had our share of them, *tout comme un autre.*"

‡ When the throne of Portugal became vacant, Jerome Buonaparte, Soult, and Murat, were candidates for the office.

of bare-headed sovereigns, in his own palace,* and in halls, where Louis XIV. danced for the amusement of his subjects, to command tributary princes to waltz for his own.† Even the descendant of that branch of the Bourbon family, whose succession to the dominions of Spain cost the *grand monarque* so much blood and treasure, was now seen quietly abiding in the territory of his ancestors, at the *country house* of the Emperor's grand chambellan; converting the woods of Valency into bonfires, to celebrate the successive victories of his conqueror; or lighting the casements of his prison to show his devotion to the sovereign,‡ who had deposed him; while the successor of St. Peter, whose predecessors had so often shaken the thrones of Europe, now became alternately

* When the monarchs of the confederation of the Rhine assembled in Paris, in 1809, Napoleon alone sat covered with a velvet hat and feather, at an entertainment given to the royal guests.

† It was a line in Racine's "*Nero*," that first taught Louis XIV. the absurdity of dancing *courantes*, and performing ballets, for the amusement of his courtiers.

‡ Ferdinand, the beloved, never failed to celebrate the victories of the Emperor, at the expense of the woods of Valency, the beautiful seat of Talleyrand, who complained bitterly of these royal depredations. The King of Spain lived in great privacy during his residence in France, devoting himself chiefly to the society of Brunet, the excellent comic actor of the *Variétés*, and of a certain agreeable dancing-master. I know not, whether this "*dieu de la danse*" accompanied his majesty back to his dominions; but it is well understood that Ferdinand made some very tempting offers to Brunet for that purpose. Brunet, however, had no ambition to follow in the steps of his predecessors, Montfleuri and Farinelli, and declined giving up those talents "to a party, which were meant for mankind." It would be curious to speculate on the probable influence of such a *maire du palais* at the Escorial, who would perhaps have in time supplanted the grand inquisitor, by "*Jocrisse père*," and have substituted the amusement of a good comedy for the national recreation of an *auto da fé*.

the guest and prisoner of him, by whom his own had been reversed.*

When the republican forms and revolutionary manners, which had so long prevailed over French society, yielded to modes of superior refinement ; and the "*teinture du ridicule*," which characterizes exaggeration, faded into a propriety adapted to all principles, it was the wisdom of the reigning chief to efface the recollection of the horrors, which had marked those days of violence, and to adopt the same merciful policy, by which Henry IV. obliterated the dissensions of the League. Even his *personal enemies* were forgiven, if they

* Pope Pius VI. was described to me, by one deep-read in human character, who had lived in habits of intimacy with the holy father, as blending in his character the eager curiosity and simplicity of a recluse, with great natural shrewdness and intelligence. Paris opened a new scene of observation to this dignified monk, and he expressed his wonder and admiration, with all the *naïveté* and frankness of childhood. "I have seen a great deal," he observed to one whom Napoleon had recommended to him as a *Ciceron*, "but I have not yet seen the *palais-royal* : pray let us go there." "*St. Père*," returned the baron, "*c'est impossible*," adding, that it would commit the character of his holiness, and compromise the discretion of his guide. "But I would go," replied the pope, eagerly, "*travestito da curato*." This extraordinary masquerade did not, however, take place. While the pope remained in Paris, a number of idle boys made a trade of assembling under his windows, to sell his benediction ; which they did by crying "*les bénédictions du très St Père, pour deux sous* ;" and when they had collected a crowd, and received the money, they commenced an outcry, calling to the pope to appear, and to bestow his benediction, in the same manner as the English mob called for "*Blucher*" and "*Emperor*," when those personages were in London. The pope always complied with their demand, appeared, and gave the required benediction, perfectly unconscious of the trick that was played on him — His amiable manners won golden opinions from all who had access to him ; and as far as he was known in France, either as guest or prisoner, he was popular, pitied and admired.

were neglected,* while not one of his *personal friends* was forgotten.† Among the first persons to whom he sent the legion of honour, were two of his early companions, who rejected them indignantly, as pledges of a despotism they never intended to acknowledge.‡ And if some of the many he raised betrayed him, and shamed themselves, even his enemies acquit him of ever forgetting a favour, or neglecting a friend. ||

But ambition, and the world, alike conspired to turn the head of a man, who, with qualities to fight his way to the summit of human greatness, wanted the higher,

* "*Il va être amnestifié*," was an expression in vogue, when I was in Paris, for a state prisoner who was about to be executed. With Napoleon, the word "amnesty" always preserved its original signification.

† When it was represented to Napoleon, that Carnot was conspiring against him, he replied, "*Lui !—il est incapable de trahison.*" A remarkable instance of his dislike to the revival of past events occurred, when Chateaubriand was received at the Institute, in the place of the Celebrated Chenier. Upon this occasion Chateaubriand, in the eulogy of his predecessor, alluded to the part that brilliant wit had taken in the revolution, and revived the recollection of times, which it was so necessary to bury in oblivion. The Emperor would not hear of this firebrand being thrown; and the illustrious martyr was rejected from the number of the elect, although in the same discourse he had lavished the most boundless homage on the man he has since stigmatized with so many epithets of opprobrium, but whom, in his *Atala*, he declares was sent from heaven, "*en signe de réconciliation, quand il est las de punir.*"

‡ Monsieur le Mercier, and Monsieur Guinguenê, both obstinately refused the favours he tendered them, without forfeiting his regard, or incurring his persecution. It is a singular circumstance, that of the multitude of persons, devoted friends, and avowed enemies, of Napoleon, who talked to me respecting him, not one accused him of ingratitude. A republican, who had been the friend of his youth, but who had refused some distinctions he had offered him, told me that the Emperor one day in conversation made this remark to him: "*Je ne suis pas bon, si vous voulez, mais je suis sur.*"—And, in fact, added this person, "*on pourroit toujours compter sur lui.*"

rarer gift, to preserve his equilibrium in the giddy point, to which he had raised himself. His mighty fall was preluded by all those symptoms of error and frailty, which seem ever to have accompanied the possession of unlimited power ; which made the madness of Alexander, and produced the downfall of the Cæsars. The nation he had dazzled, rather than degraded, watched with suspicious jealousy the strengthening of his power, and the extension of his influence. Had it chosen a despotic form of government, unquestionably it would have preferred Napoleon for its chief ; but the fermentation of revolutionary feelings had now subsided into principles of constitutional right, and of rational liberty. England had long been the model of France, and she then little dreamed that England would be the first to start forth, to forbid the imitation of her own bright example, or, by the all-prevailing alchymy of superior force, change her chain of gold into links of lead, rescuing her from the lion's grasp, only to submit her to the influence of the *terpedo*.*

When it was believed that Napoleon had said, "*J'étouffe en Europe, il faut respirer en Asie*," the sentence† was taken by the people as the Epigraph to his ambi-

* The French fully expected that the allies would leave them to the choice of their own government, if they remained faithful to the treaty of Paris.

† When the venerable Gregoire, the ex-bishop of Blois, who always opposed the views of Buonaparte in the senate, spoke against the creation of the new nobility, he made some allusion to Cæsar. Buonaparte observed with a smile, "*Pourquoi s'avise-t-il de parler de nous autres ?*"

One of his flatterers observing to him, that the nation looked up to him, "as a god !" he shrugged his shoulders and replied, "*Un dieu ! c'est là un cul-de-sac*." After the battle of Marengo, it was observed to him that not one of his staff was killed : he replied, "*Ils étoient avec moi, ma fortune les préservait*."

tion ; and when public opinion loosened from the chief, public spirit rallied the nation. The explosion against domestic tyranny was universal ; but no provision was made against foreign conquest ; and the country and the ruler, the temple and the idol, fell together. To have moved steadily in the dazzling sphere that fate had assigned him, was all that was required of this meteor of a moment. But retrograding into old systems, he soon fell, to rise, indeed for a moment, to irradiate and amaze, and then sunk, to rise no more. But though his light be extinguished, the track of his course will long brighten the political horizon of Europe. Others will gleam, where he shone, and fade, and be forgotten ; but though many will rejoice in his extinction, none will ever forget the splendor of his blaze, nor the rapidity of his motion.

* * * * *

My visit to the capital of France was paid in the spring of 1816, and whatever length of days be granted me, I shall always recur to that period as among the few delightful epochs, preserved in the memory of the heart, over which time holds no influence, and to which even selfishness may turn, when sensibility shall be no more. Circumstances the most flattering rendered my position in French society the most favourable, for that general view of the several orders, which the peculiar events of the times had multiplied and assembled in Paris. The agitated surface, still heaving with recent commotion, was strewn with relics of remote time, thrown up from the bosom of oblivion ; and it was covered with specimens of all the recent political systems, which had reigned in France, since the first great social irruption. Characters belonging to different ages ; opinions supported in

distant eras ; dogmas the most novel ; prejudices the most antiquated ; philosophy the most sceptical ; bigotry the most inveterate ; opposition the most violent ; submission the most abject ;—all appeared mingling on the scene of daily intercourse, as if the discomfiture of some powerful enchanter had suddenly released the multifarious victims of his magical influence, who, resuming their peculiar forms, presented an assemblage at once the most singular and the most contradictory.

Among many of the various groups, which made up the pleasant masquerade of Parisian society, I had the good fortune to be introduced, through the medium of some light effusions, for which an elegant translation had obtained some popularity. Known alike to "*royalistes modérés*," and to "*royalistes exagérés*," to constitutionalists and to imperialists, were I to score up the sums of kindness I received from each, it would be difficult to decide in whose favour the balance of my account would turn. But while I endeavour to "catch the living manners as they rise," I would anxiously impress the conviction that I am painting *classes*, not *individuals* ; and that, in generalizing the features, which mark the peculiar properties of each order in the social system, it is my wish to tread lightly on the *amour-propre* of a people, whose excellence and virtue it is to respect, and to spare, the *amour-propre* of all the world.

The interregnum, which occurred in the French government, in 1814 and 1815, was a *pierre de touche* of public opinion, and evinced the progress which constitutional principles had made in the nation. Those who still survived of the constitutionalists of 1789 ; those who had raised their voices in the *first* cry of liberty, now raised them in the *last* ; and appeared again upon

the scene of action, still struggling against despotism, whatever form it might assume. They combatted not for the Emperor nor for the king: for a series of twenty-five years they had preserved their principles unchanged: the terrors of an infuriate democracy had not daunted them: the splendour of a brilliant court did not dazzle them. They had long, indeed, abandoned their earlier Utopian dreams; but they invariably cherished that pure bright spark of patriot fire, which had been their column, in the wilderness; which had shone upon the path of their exile, brightened the shed of their retreat; and which now, when genius has become suspected, and patriotism treasonable, shines over the abode of their voluntary retirement, and marks the spot, where wise men may come and worship.

But though the La Fayettees, the Carnots, the Gregories, and the Guinguenés, have again receded from the unequal contest, to the bosom of philosophical retirement and of domestic virtue, their transient appearance on the scenes of public life revived many a drooping hope, and called forth spirits and awakened energies, which still remain buoyant on the surface of society, to add to its fermentation, and to increase its interest. Almost the whole of those who make up the thinking class of society (including the men of professional and scientific research,) are constitutionalists; and with this large and superior portion of the population is now blended the greater number of the Buonapartists, who, hopeless of their own lost cause, and having nothing to expect for themselves, extend their views, once confined to their party, to the political welfare of the country. Some, however, whom Buonaparte rescued from the deepest

obscurity, are now the most zealous adherents of the king; and, commuting only the terms royal and imperial, offer the same fulsome homage to Louis XVIII. they so profusely lavished on Napoleon.

While the mass of the population are stigmatized by the royalist party with the epithet of "*les enfans de la révolution*;" while, as I heard it expressed, "*la race qui date de 1789 est proscrite par des vieillards, et la jeunesse est marquée de la sceau de la réprobation*," these children of the revolution are distinguished by all those indications of freshness, vigour, and energy, which belong to a new, or a regenerated people. This circumstance, united with the inherent vivacity and impetuosity of the French character, gives a tone of excitement and animation to their existence, which it is cheering to witness, and resuscitating to participate. That charming maxim of French urbanity, that in the salon "all ranks are equal;" and the position, that "*l'esprit est une dignité*," were an acknowledged truth even in the days of the most over-bearing aristocracy. But if there ever was a period in the history of any nation, in which man lorded it over situation, in which individual merit took precedence of all factitious circumstances, that period now exists in the society of France.—The nation is no longer to be deceived by sounds, nor amused by toys, to be

"Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw."

It has been experimentally proved, through the conflicting revolutions, how little artificial distinctions avail-
ed, though consecrated by time, and upheld by prejudice.

Man alone is now the object with man; and *talent* the star, which governs the ascendant of public opinion.*

While titles and riches have been scattered with a prodigal hand to plebeian merit, and to serviceable indigence, their splendor and dignity have been still further eclipsed by the changes resulting from frequent revolution; which have built up and dispersed, elevated and degraded, with the transiency and instability of a fairy dream; and a primitive simplicity, an absence of ostentatious display, in the reigning modes of life, have arisen in France, which aptly assimilate themselves to the tone of the public mind. It is among these contemners of old systems, these vigorous disciples of a practical philosophy, these *children of the revolution*, that the remains of a worn-out race, the mouldering relics of ancient errors, are again brought back, to throw their chilling influence over awakened energy, and to impose restraint upon new impulsions, like the snows, which fall on the burning bosom of Hecla, or the ashes of exhausted fires which a passing wind scatters over the vigorous vegetation of Sicilian plains.

When the armies of the allied sovereigns had restored the Bourbon dynasty to its ancient dominions, the royal representative of that long venerated race returned to the capital of his kingdom, like the antiquarian, who rises from the depths of Herculaneum or of Portici, encumbered with relics, and accompanied with the remains of other times. The sudden resurrection of a

* Public opinion has undergone a great change, since the late Duc de Castries observed, in speaking of the noise made by the quarrel between Rousseau and Diderot, "*Cela est incroyable, on ne parle que de ces gens-là ; gens, sans état, qui n'ont point de maison, logés dans un grenier ; on ne s'accoutume pas à cela.*"

long-buried aristocracy, "bursting its scarments," added another class to the existing arrangement of French society, brought into intimate contact the races of two distinct ages, and mingled the recovered medals of antiquity with the bolder stamped currency of a present coinage. The old emigrant nobility, and their scarcely younger offspring, who accompanied, followed, or joined the king, from all parts of Europe, evinced, that in the transit of more than the quarter of a century, they had suffered only in the out-works of their construction, from the attacks of time, or the innovations of the age. The citadel of opinion was impregnable; experience had made no breach, example could make no impression; and the cumbrous edifice remained indestructible by reason or by proof: dark, compact, and narrow, covered by the mould of centuries, and guarded by prejudices, originating in ignorance, and cherished by selfishness.

These inhabitants of the "sleeping wood," suddenly recalled from their suspended animation, soon convinced the children of the revolution, that "*ils n'avaient rien appris, comme ils n'avaient rien oublié,*" and that the "toad, adversity, ugly and venomous," wore not, for them, a "precious jewel in its head." The *guidons* of the lily, too soon, placed the snowy standard of peace in the grasp of vengeance, who waved it over the monument of Quiberon,* and stained it with the blood of the brave, and the tears of the afflicted. This long-forgotten faction, on their first return to France, rallied unanimously round the throne of the Bourbons; under the

* This monument was raised by the Bourbons, to commemorate the slaughter of the emigrants at Quiberon.

common and long proscribed name of "*royalistes*." But personal interest soon divided general opinion; and the polypus dissection then distinguished itself under the classes of "*modéré*," and "*ultra*."

The *modérés* ranged round the king, the *ultras* round the princes; the one desired to keep, by moderation, what they had obtained by preference; the others wished to seize by violence, what they had not gained by election. The "*tout prendre*" was the sole maxim and principle of both. The *royalistes modérés*, consisting of the "*vicilleries*" of the old times, preserved an hereditary devotion to the representatives of their ancient kings, which they had imbibed in days peculiarly favourable to that sentiment; and satisfied with their portion of the plunder, they submitted to share the spoils with the *roturier* Buonapartists, whose services and talents had placed them high in the ministry of their own regime. The *ultras*, made up of young men, led by younger chiefs, more ambitious than sordid, more devoted to the Bourbon *faction*, than to the Bourbon *representative*, sought to guide the helm, as well as to "share the triumph and partake the gale."

Thus, while personal interest and personal vanity appeared to be the basis of the political principles of both, the interests of the nation were left to the private discussion of those, who dared to turn their thoughts to that hazardous point, at the risk of subjecting themselves to the imputation of jacobinism. Balanced in the measure of their talent, and equally careless of the consequences of their conduct, these two factions occupy the foreground of the scene, and intimately associated yet fiercely opposed, avowing one principle, yet pursuing

different measures, they seem to imitate the warfare of the monkey tribes, who make war on their own species, and threatening vengeance from their opposite trees, grind their teeth, and chatter, and grimace in expectation of that moment, when they may commence with safety to bite, and claw,* and to exterminate.

While such appears the political position of the royalists, *ultra* and *modérés*, their place and character, in private society, is marked by all the peculiar traits of their descent and cast. And though there are a multitude of exceptions to the general outline of the sketch, though taste and talent, domestic virtue and social amiability, are to be found amongst individuals of both factions, yet the prevailing hue of their "*manière d'être*" has a strong taint of the *old times*; and something of the tone, style, and modes of the courts of the three last Louis's, is still to be found in the descendants of the "*gens comme il faut*," of those noted days. It is in these circles, that the *bureaux d'esprit* of the *hôtel Rambouillet* are still occasionally erected; that the "*littérature du boudoir*," passes for erudition, and that criticisms on the humour of Moliere, or the genius of Racine, are repeated, after the decisions of the literary tribunals of Louis XIV. with all the air of their original freshness. Here the encyclopædists are still anathematized, *en masse*; the Turgots and the Neckers are accused of founding the revolution; Voltaire placed under the ban of orthodox opinion, and Rousseau condemned for his dangerous

* A very highly endowed ultra-royalist, Mons. C——, said to me a few days before I left Paris: "You may depend upon it, the rock on which we shall split will be vanity. All want to command, and none will obey. *En attendant*, our disputes and contentions are, *un délire pour les jacobins*."

republicanism, in spite of that sentimental rhetoric, which is more than ever the jargon of their class. Here Corneille is *baroque*, Beaumarchais *mauvais ton*, and Mad. de Stael a *phrasière*; while Mirabeau, Condorcet, and Champfort, condemned equally for their eloquence, their wit, and their philosophy, are consigned to ignominious celebrity, as *des jacobins scélérats*.

In these circles the veteran *voltigeur* recurs to the "*campagnes à la rose*" of Louis XV. and "fights all his battles o'er again," in the salon of his ancient mistress; the *ami de maison*, grown grey in his chains, recalls the morals of the same times, and wields the fan, and hovers near the *bergère* of his liege-lady, with a decent observance of all the rules of established *bien-séance*; while many a *ci-devant jeune homme* indulges in a certain tone of licensed pleasantry, *tant soi peut libre*, which denotes him, though now "meagre and very rueful in his looks," to have once shown in the galaxy of fashion, a "*charmant polisson*," or an "*amiable roué*," the Pomenars, or the Richelieu of other days.

It is in the salons of this party that anecdotes of royal sentiment, and specimens of royal wit, circulate in endless repetition. Here "*l'esprit de Henri IV.*" is revived; "*les sentimens nobles*" of Louis the Great added to the collection of royal *anas*, and the whole compendium of *bon mots of the reigning family* re-echoed with increasing admiration. Here the king is made to utter "*le mot, qui part du cœur*;" Monsieur, to express himself with that "*tournure charmante, qui lui convient*;" the unrivalled courage of Mons. d'Angouleme is eternally set off by his repartee, of "*mon ami, j'ai la vue basse*;"*

* Made in reply to a remark that he exposed his person too much, during a reconnaissance.

—and the Duc de Berri, who affords no *prise* in wit or sentiment for loyal admiration, is extolled for a *brusquerie*, that recalls the charming frankness of the founder of his family; and “being little blessed with the set phrase of peace,” is usually mentioned as a martial prince, bred in camps, and endowed with a certain degree of *esprit de garnison, qui lui sied à merveille*.” Terms hyperbolically ardent are applied to every member of the royal family: “*les princes chéris*” are adored by the *ultras*, and the “*roi paternal*” is “*idolâtré*,” by all the *modérés*. With the sentiments and intellectual condition of the nation, both parties are equally unacquainted; and the population of the land is again divided into the *menu peuple*, and the *gens, comme il faut*.

Among those of the elder royalists attached to the person of the king, and believing that they contributed to his restoration, there is a sort of lifeless animation, resembling the organic movements which survive the extinction of animal life, and which are evidenced in the hopping of a bird after decapitation. I have frequently amused myself by following the groupings of these loyal *vieilleries*, who, like old Mercier, seem to continue living on merely “*par curiosité, pour voir ce que cela deviendra*.”—I remember one morning being present at a *rencontre* between two “*voltigeurs** *de Louis XIV.*” on the terrace of the Thuilleries. They were distinguished by the most dramatic features of their class;—the one was in his court-dress (for it was a *levée* day), and with his *chapeau de bras* in one hand, and his snuff-box in the other, he exhibited a costume, on which perhaps the bright eyes of a Pompadour had

* The name given in derision to old military men, re-established in all the rank and privileges they enjoyed, before the revolution.

often rested : the other was *en habit militaire*, and might have been a spruce ensign, "*joli comme un cœur*," at the battle of Fontenoy. Both were covered with crosses and ribbons, and they moved along under the trees, that had shaded their youthful *gaillardise*, with the conspicuous triumph of Moorish chiefs restored to their promised Alhambra. Their telegraphic glasses communicated their mutual approach, and advancing *chapeaux bas*, and shaking the powder from their *ailes de pigeon*, through a series of profound bows, they took their seat on the bench, which I occupied, and began, "*les nouvelles à la main*," to discuss the business of the day.

A *levée*, a review, a procession, and the installation of the king's bust, which in some remote town had been received with cries of "*Vive le roi, mille fois répétés*," were the subjects which led to a boundless eulogium on the royal family. The speeches made by the king and the Duc de Berri to Count Lynch were themes of extravagant admiration.—"*Ah, mon Dieu, oui*," (said the courtier) "*voilà bien nos princes ! Et l'usurpateur, monsieur le général ! a-t-il jamais parlé de la sorte !*"—"*Comment donc, Monsieur le baron ! vous nous parlez du tyran ? C'étoit un bourgeois de la rue St. Denis, dans toutes les façons ; Monsieur le baron, croyez bien que, si les jours du meilleur des rois étaient menacés, nous lui ferions, de nous tous, un rempart de nos corps ; là.*"

"*Monsieur le général*," (exclaimed the baron, placing his little hat or three hairs of his *toupet*) "*on n'a pas besoin d'être militaire pour penser ainsi.*" Both now arose, in the exaltation of the moment ; the one shuffling

towards the palace; the other hobbling to the *corps de garde* of the Cent Suisses.*

References to the *tyrant* and to the *usurper* are constantly made by the courtiers of Louis XVIII. and even his usurpation seems to be not more an object of execration, than his inability to "*représenter noblement.*" The enthusiasm which always displayed itself in Paris, when he appeared in public, is now ascribed to the police; and the homage offered to the king, in the garden of the Thuilleries, is obstinately believed to be the unpurchased effusions of that loyalty, "*qui part du cœur*:" for the term "*cœur*" has become a distinguished article in the vocabulary of the French court; and is held in equal estimation with "*les graces et les amours*," and the other mythological emigrants, who have returned with the rest of the "ancient regime."

I was one evening waiting in the anti-room of the Dutchess d'Angouleme, until my turn came for the honour of a presentation to her royal highness, when

* Instances of this sort of *resurrection* are by no means uncommon; the veteran royalists abound, in a proportion perfectly incomprehensible. I myself knew a gentleman, who *fell* on the plains of Quiberon, and who had no reason to suppose himself alive for some hours. Left for dead on the field, but only severely wounded, he seized a favourable moment for resuscitation, assumed the uniform, arms, and credentials of a deceased republican soldier, who lay by his side, and after serving some time, as a sifter, contrived to make his escape, and lives to tell the story. Many others too, since the restoration, seem to have returned from that "*bourne*," whence it is vulgarly supposed, "no traveller returns." An *élève de St. Cyr*," keeps a "*pension*," or boarding-school, for young ladies in the fauxbourg St. Germaine: the *coëffeur* of Marie Antoinette affixes this distinction on a placard which promises "*des nouveautés en tout genre*," and Mons. de B. master of the ceremonies to Louis XV. presides over the steps and motions of the reigning beauties, after having directed those of their grandmothers.

the Princess de la T——, who stood near me, was called by one of the ladies in waiting, to look at a group, dancing under the windows of the apartment. This circle, which was performing *la ronde* to the air of "*gai, gai, marionsnous*," sung by themselves, was composed of a few soldiers, and some women of no very equivocal appearance; while the feeble cries of "*vive le roi*," so often heard from childish voices, were rarely strengthened by deeper tones of loyal exclamation. To the *dame d'honneur*, however, all this appeared a rapturous symptom of universal loyalty, such as never had been witnessed in the best days of royal France. "*Voyez donc, princesse*," (she observed to Mad. de la T.) "*quelle algresse du cœur! voilà la franche loyauté, de nos bons vieux-tems! A-t-on jamais vu une pareille joie, pendant l'usurpation du tyran?*"

There appears, indeed, among these ardent royalists a resolute determination to see every object, through the medium of their wishes. It is vain to talk to them of the past, or lead them to the future; they exist but for the present, in the persuasion, that change can never come; almost forgetting that it ever did occur; and believing that the *beau siècle de Louis XIV.* is about to be restored in all its splendour, and extent of despotism. Every thing that is said, or done, by every member of the royal family, is repeated with interest, and detailed with delight; and if the infirmities of the monarch allowed him the innocent amusement, of pulling the chairs from under the ladies of the court, like his great predecessor, there would be scarcely one amongst them who would not canvass the distinction of a *cul-bute*, like the former subservient Dutchesses of Versailles.

Having been separated from my party, at court, on the night of the *grand couvert*, held in honour of the Duc de Berri's marriage, I found myself seated amidst a little group of "*royalistes purs*," who were commenting on the gastronomic talent displayed by his Majesty, and who seemed to consider his powers of mastication and of deglutition as among the virtues of his character, and the charms of his person. "*Voyez, donc*," said an old lady in an head-dress *à la Maintenon*, to a knight of *St. Louis*, decorated with a badge of his order, "*Voyez notre bon roi, il mange comme quatre, le roi ! Mais c'est un appétit charmant, charmant ! !*" "*Eh, pourquoi non ?*" demanded the chevalier. "*Il est d'une vigueur, le roi ; mais d'une vigueur extraordinaire.*" "*Et Madame d'Angoulême*," added the lady, "*comme elle est embellie ce soir ! et sa Majesté, qu'il a l'air d'un père de famille !*"

"*Enfin, madame*," interrupted the chevalier, offering his snuff-box, whose lid represented the whole house of Bourbon, *en papier mâché*. *Enfin, madame, c'est un beau tableau de famille, que voilà !*"*

Personal devotion to the king is not however exclusively confined to the elders of the privileged classes. It was a profane maxim of a profane French wit, that "*les vieilles et les laides sont toujours pour Dieu ;*" and his present Majesty of France seems to enjoy a similar devotion, as part of his divine right. Many of the aged members, of the middle classes of the capital, have remained true to the good old cause ; and the *petits rentiers*, or stockholders of the fauxbourg St. Germaine (that centre of all antiquity and royalism), assemble morning and

* I literally copy the jargon of loyalty as I took it down, *de vive voix*, in my journal.

evening before the windows of the Thuilleries, in the hope of seeing the king pass and repass to and from his morning's drive; and they remain seated on the benches which front the facade of the palace, among piping fawns, and fighting gladiators. These monumental figures contrast themselves, with peculiar force, to the marble wonders of the chisel which surround them, and to the fitting groups of the present age, which glide by, turning on them looks of the same pleased curiosity, as I have seen bestowed on the *monumens François*, at *les petits Augustins*. Here the costumes of the three reigns which preceded the revolution are preserved and amicably united. Here is still to be seen the "*hurlu-brelu*" head-dress, the subject of so many of Mad. de Sevigné's pleasant letters. Here too may be found the *bonnets à papillons pointés* and *petites comètes* of the du Defflands and Geofrins, with the *fichus de soufflet*, and the more modern *négligé* of the Polignacs and Lamballes. These venerable votaries of loyalty, who have so long "owed heaven a death," that they seem to have been forgotten by their creditor, are chiefly females. They are always accompanied by a *cortége* of little dogs, which, half-shorn, and half-fed, fastened to girdles, no longer the gift of the graces, by ribbons no longer "*couleur de rose*," are under the jurisdiction of large fans, frequently extended to correct the "*petites folies*" of these *Sylphides* and *Fidèles*, when they sport round their ancient mistresses, with unbecoming levity.

The daily course of patience, to which these veteran dames submit, is relieved by the employments of knitting and netting, and by a *causerie* in all the set phrase and jargon of better times. The speculations are end-

less, whether the king will, or will not drive out ; and the most ingenious anagrams are discovered in those portentous words, "*Buonaparte*" and "*Révolution*," which predicted the downfall of the one, and the extinction of the other.*

At the apparition of the king, passing the balcony surrounded by his guards (for every room in the palace exhibits soldiers in the windows,) dogs, fans, and anagrams are all instantly forgotten. A host of *ci-devant* white handkerchiefs wave in the air ; and "*vive le roi*" is "*mille fois répété*," in sounds that scarcely reach the gracious ear, for which they are intended.

These phalanxes of antiquarian loyalty, male and female, were daily thinning, however, when I left France, from the total inability of the "best of kings" to provide for his venerable adherents, in a manner suitable to their spirited ambition and sanguine hopes. All who can furbish up an old claim to the distinction of a *gentil-homme nê*, call for restitution of lands, rights, and privileges ; and though they, many of them, return to their country, at the end of twenty-five years, neither more indigent nor more insignificant than when they left it, they raise the outcry against royal ingratitude, mount a *croix de St. Louis*, talk most pathetically of the ancient splendor of their *châteaux*, and their *terres*, and exclaim against the impolicy of the king, in neglecting his *fidèle noblesse*, who would alone form a fence round his throne !! such a fence as they formed round the throne of his unfortunate brother !

* "*La France veut son roi*," and "*un Corse la finira*," are prophecies detected by loyal anagrammatists, in the words "*Révolution Française*."

These ancient "*gentil-hommes nés*, a source of annoyance to the king and to his ministers, afford endless subject of amusement to the "naughty children of the revolution," who are foolish enough to risk their safety, or their interests, for a joke. The young, gallant and handsome Count de L——, grandson of Mad. de Genlis, lost his promotion in the army, from his too close and admirable representation of one of these "*fiers marquis*."

"The very head and front of his offence was this,
No more."*

* The young Comte de L—— presented himself, in the full *costume* of Louis XIV. at a fashionable *café*, where a number of his brother officers were assembled. Passing for *un ancien général*, he expressed himself with great violence against the present state of military tactics; and without being discovered, excited much entertainment in his unsuspecting comrades. Triumphant with the success of his dramatic representation, he finished his evening by walking in the gardens of the Thuilleries. The next day, when he presented himself at the levee of the minister, to obtain his promised colonelcy of the —— regiment, he was informed that his Majesty had withdrawn his consent to that arrangement. Mon. L—— received this disappointment with great resignation and cheerfulness, and passing from the portals of the palace to the terrace of the Thuilleries, he suddenly met the very type and model of the character he had represented the night before, in the figure of an old "*voltigeur*," with a *coëffure à l'oison royal*, and all the *insignia* of his order. Without knowing him, he immediately counselled him to retire, and change his dress, if he did not wish to excite the resentment of the king; "for, monsieur," he added, "only from my adopting the *costume*, which becomes you so well, I have just lost the colonelcy of the —— regiment." "The *véritable Amphytrion*," equally overwhelmed with gratitude and consternation, assured Mons. L—— he would immediately profit by his kind advice, having retained the dress he had worn in the court of Louis XV. as that most gracious to the eyes of his illustrious descendant.

While the young *étourdis* thus occasionally amuse themselves with these dangerous imitations, the professed wits of the capital, who have not yet enlisted in the service of the Apollo and the Muses of the royal Pantheon, produce daily some squib against the ex-gentility of France. From these I select the following *chanson*, as being the most recent, rather than the most bitter, philippic against the venerable *order of the resurrection*.

LE MARQUIS DE CARABUS.

Air.—*Le grand Roi Dagobert.*

Voyez ce fier Marquis,
Nous traitant en peuple conquis,
Son coursier décharné,
De loin, chez nous l'a ramené.

Vers son vieux castel
Ce noble mortel
Marche, en brandissant
Un sabre innocent.
Chapeau bas, chapeau bas,
Gloire au Marquis de Carabus !

Amoûniers, Châtelains,
Vassaux, vavasseurs, et villains,
C'est moi, (dit-il) c'est moi,
Qui *seul* a rétabli mon roi.

Mais il ne me rend
Les droits de mon rang ;
Avec moi, corbleu !
Il verra beau jeu.
Chapeau bas, &c. &c.

Vivons donc en repos ;
Mais l'on m'ose parler d'impôts.
A l'état, pour son bien,
Un gentil-homme ne doit rien.
Grace à mes créneaux,
A mes arsenaux,

Je puis au préfet
Dire un peu son fait.
Chapeau bas, &c. &c.

Pour nous calomnier,
Bien qu'on a parlé d'une manière,
Ma famille eut, pour chef,
Un des fils de *Pépin le bref*.
D'après mon blason,
Je vois ma maison
Plus noble, ma foi,
Que celle du roi !
Chapeau bas, &c. &c.

Qui me résisteroit ?
La marquise a le tabouret,
Pour être évêque, un jour,
Mon dernier fils suivra la cour,
Mons fils, le baron,
(Quoiqu'un peu poltron,)
Veut avoir des croix,
Il en aura trois.
Chapeau bas, &c. &c.

Prêtres, que nous vengeons,
Levez la dîme, et partageons.
A toi, *peuple animal*,
Porte encore le bât féodal.

Seuls nous vous chasserons,
Et tous vos tendrons
Subiront l'honneur,
Du droit de seigneur.
Chapeau bas, &c. &c.

Curé, fais ton devoir,
Remplis pour nous ton encensoir.

Vous, pages, et valets,
Guerre au villains, et rossez-les.
Que de mes ayeux
Ces droits glorieux
Passent, tous entiers,
A mes héritiers.
Chapeau bas, &c. &c.

A few years back, all ranks and distinctions were lost in the affectedly simple appellations of *citoyen* and *citoyenne*. At present France is inundated with titles, multiplied far beyond the heraldic dignities of those aristocratical days, when, according to Smollet, "Mons. le Comte" called to his son, in the business of their noble *verger*, "*Mons. le Marquis, avez-vous donné à manger aux cochons ?*" Every body now, who affects loyalty to the reigning dynasty, professes it under the sanction of a title; and I observed that both the superior and inferior orders of society gave a peculiar emphasis to every revived mark of nobility. Even the valet de chambre, as he flung open the folding-doors, *les grands battans*, of the salon, vociferated the names of the successive guests, with a marked and cadenced pronunciation, of madame-la-baronne, madame-la-comtesse, monsieur le duc, and monsieur le vicomte! Meantime the legitimate, or pretended, owners of these titles appear to be wrapt in ecstasy over the long-forgotten distinctions, which, at all times unaccompanied by legislative functions or political influence, are now but seldom backed by that opulence, which is in itself a rank; and they are indeed

—— "full of sound,
Signifying nothing."

By a singular contradiction, however, rank, of even the highest order, takes no precedence in private society. Even among the old noblesse, there is a sort of *pêle-mêle* confusion in the ingress and egress from assemblies, dinner-parties, and *soirées*, which no one endeavours to arrange, by either giving or taking the *pas*. Speaking on this subject to one, who speaks well upon all, with whom it is always instruction to converse, and to whom it is delightful to listen, the Comtesse Pastoret, she observed; "It is high birth rather than high rank that is estimated in France; but neither are marked in private society by those minute forms of precedence, to which you free-born republican English pay such minute observance. At court, our dukes have their place, and our dutchesses their *tabourets*; but in the salon, if any distinction is made, it is in favour of genius, celebrity, or age; while to be a stranger, is an *état* in itself.

Rank is very ill defined in France, even by the most strenuous advocates for its privileges. I was informed that a baron is sometimes more noble than a duke; and on my asking a royalist, whether Mons. D—— was a "*gentil-homme nè?*" he replied, "No: he is *d'une naissance noble*, but he is not *gentil-homme*." I asked what constitutes that rank in the state; and he made me this singular reply: "*the privilege of going in the king's coach*." Thus the rank, which in England gives its possessor a seat in the senate, in France may not entitle him to "*a seat in the king's coach*." What must have been the genius of the old government, when the energy and spirit of the nobility were broken down to such distinctions as these! To be permitted to accompany *Louis le Grand*, in his drives from Versailles to

Marli, and from Marli to Versailles, (the great occupation of his life) was an honour of which all his nobles were proudly ambitious; and Madame de Sevigné describes one of these royal *promenades, en voiture*, in a manner that gives a fair picture of the morals, and spirit of the times. The king went first, in a *calèche* with his *mistress*, her sister, and brothers; the noble Mortimarts and Thiangés! then followed the queen and princesses, legitimate and illegitimate.*

However striking these evidences of social degradation may be, to the eye of moral and political philosophy, to the glance of the genuine French royalist they are not perceptible; or, if observed, are but considered as trifling "*égaremens du cœur et de l'esprit*" in the royal legislators, who at once modelled and executed their own system of government. On this subject they will hear no reasoning: unable to deny, what it is impossible to defend, they cut short all argument with: "*cependant je voudrois que tout cela fût, comme dans le bon vieux temps.*"

A very clever and intimate friend of mine at Paris, with considerable talent and some wit, had gotten deeply entangled with the *royalistes enragés*; and was herself indeed *enragée*, to a point that was sometimes extremely amusing. We were chatting one morning, when a royalist acquaintance joined us, and mentioned an ordinance of the king's, which directed the formation of a new military school, after the model of that instituted in 1750, for the education of the young nobility. I could not help remarking, that I doubted whe-

* The Princesse de Conti was the natural daughter of the king, by Mad. de la Valière, and was always of these parties.

ther this new school, upon old rules, would assimilate in its systems with the tactics of the military and polytechnic seminaries, formed during the revolution. My little *enragés* flew into a paroxysm of loyal indignation, and interrupted me with "*mais, ma chère, ne me parlez pas de vos écoles polytechniques*, those hot-beds of jacobinism and brigandage.* It is our wish (*nous autres*) that the rising generation should be shut up, and educated in a profound ignorance of all that has happened for these last thirty years; and that on coming forth into the world, they might find every thing *in statu quo*, as it was in the *beau siècle de Louis XIV.*"

"And the Bastile?" I asked.

"*Eh, mais oui, ma chère; et la Bastile aussi.*"

The Bastile, she added, was a sort of *maison de plaisance*, when men of rank were sent to it, for having incurred the displeasure of the king; as in the instance of the Duke de Richelieu, who was visited there by all the beautiful princesses of that day, who were *éperdue-ment* in love with him. That for the *lie du peuple*, it was, if any thing, too stately and too noble a place of confinement; and as for the *iron cages* and *subterraneous dungeons*, they were only for state criminals who spoke against the king and his government--"*et tout cela, c'étoit très juste.*" But I insisted on the facility with which a *lettre de cachet* might be procured, to shut up such

* The *élèves* of the *école militaire* of Metz received the duke de Berri, with their arms crossed, in consequence of some observations falling from his royal highness signifying that he deemed these military schools little better than nests of jacobinism and brigandage.

On his inquiring, in a rather rough manner, what was to be learned in these seminaries? the chief master replied: "*Mon Prince, c'est une école, où on apprend à mourir pour sa patrie.*"

suspected criminals, before any form of justice had pronounced them guilty."

She shrugged her shoulders and replied: "*Pour les lettres de cachet, on en peut dire autant de bien que de mal ! tenez, ma chère !* Suppose I had a brother whose conduct disgraced our family, would you have us expose his shame, and throw an odium on our house, by suffering him to come into a court of justice ? No, there was a time, when, under such circumstances, the honour and dignity of a noble family was saved ; and a *lettre de cachet* got rid of the *mauvais sujet*, and buried together the criminal and the crime—*Eh bien, il faut toujours espérer que le bon tems reviendra ! !*"

I quote these sentiments, uttered by a woman of rank, talent, and education, as being (I believe very generally) those of the party to which she belonged.

While the royalists or personal adherents to the representative of the Capets and the Bourbons take for their device the well-known cry of Vendean loyalty, "*vive le roi ; quand même,*" and display upon all occasions sentiments worthy of this headlong devotion ; the *ultras* are by no means equally unreserved in their principles of attachment to the person and measures of the king. Louis XVIII. is treated by them as "a good, easy man," whose moderation is weakness ; who, unnecessarily false, and injudiciously arbitrary, excludes from power those who are most capable of exercising it ; and merely contents himself with chopping off a few hands and heads, when hecatombs should bleed, to appease the spirit of unglutted vengeance, and to clear the kingdom of such persons and principles as he now suffers to share his counsels, and dictate his ordinances.

Upon one occasion, an *ultra*, speaking of the king in terms of reprobation, that amounted nearly to accusing his most Christian Majesty of jacobinism and infidelity, I could not help asking him ; "*le roi donc, est-il royaliste ?*" "*Voilà, madame, ce que nous doutons,*" was the reply.

In another instance, I was driving through the Bois de Boulogne, with a lady of the same political sentiments, when the desolated state of that once beautiful spot called forth her lamentations and reproaches. Addressing me in a tone of complaint, as though it had been I who had carried off "*Birnam wood to Dunsinane,*" she exclaimed, "*Voilà, madame, voilà l'ouvrage de vous autres Anglais.*" I could not help feeling piqued at her ingratitude for the services which, at least, had been rendered to her party ; and I answered, "*Eh bien, madame, vous avez un roi, en échange de votre bois.*" She shrugged her shoulders, shook her head, and raised her eyebrows ; and replied in a broken sentence, "*pour cela, ma chère dame—eh ! eh ! que voulez-vous ?*" as if not quite satisfied with the equivalent.

I indeed observed upon all occasions, that the royalists and *ultras* showed a perfect insensibility to the services rendered them by the allies in general, and by the English in particular. I remember walking with a party of *ultras* near the spot where prince Blucher fell from his horse, when an Englishman of the party observed that it was there where the prince had broken some bone ; and an *ultra* replied, *apart*, if it had been his neck it would have been no great matter."

It is strange that even the Buonapartists and constitutionalists, though protesting against the policy and false-

hood of the English government, express themselves more favourably towards the nation than the royalists; who, though pleased with the restoration, cannot altogether brook the discreditable manner of their return, nor cease to feel that they have been *too much obliged*. It is certain, moreover, that the moral and political feelings of the constitutionalists assimilate more closely with those maintained in England, than the notions of the advocates of the *old regime* in France, who assert unceasingly, that the *anglo-mania* which prevailed immediately before the revolution, was among the leading causes of that event; and that Voltaire's letters on England were for his country the most pernicious work he ever wrote.*

The gradual alteration in tone and manner of the *ultra* circles, during my residence at Paris, was extremely obvious, and to an uninterested observer very amusing. They no longer seemed bound to "hint a fault, and hesitate dislike" to the measures of the government; but ventured, even in certain traits of amiable weakness discoverable in the character of his Majesty, to find subjects of pleasantry and sources of censure. Their once loud vociferations, in favour of the *divine right* of kings, to be a surd without ridicule, and arbitrary without blame, appeared now utterly forgotten or wholly recanted.

* They accuse England of all their misfortunes; of originating the revolution; of sending the emigrants to be slaughtered at Quiberon; and of letting loose Buonaparte from Elba. Even still they consider the ex-emperor as a sort of *bag-fox* to be let loose, whenever the English ministry may be inclined to *show sport* to Europe.

The Buonapartist-ministry, as they term it, is treated with avowed contempt; the measures of the court publicly reprobated; and even the private friendships and tender predilections of the king receive but little quarter. The respect paid to *le Père la Chaise*, by the courtiers of Louis XIV. is denied, by their descendants, to the *Père Elysée* of Louis XVIII. And those noble dames,* whose great-grandmothers canvassed a look from the mistress of that king, and were the associates of all her dissipated orgies, refuse their countenance to the innocent and platonic preference of the reigning sovereign. The *ultra* ladies openly exclaim against the degradation of a place once so nobly filled, and now occupied by a "*petite maîtresse de province*." Although it is understood, that Mad. de P—— holds her captive only by the delicate chains of mind, yet this spiritual communion is ridiculed; and the *roturière Agnes Sorrel* falls within the general maxim of the class, as to her intellectual charms,

" Nul n'aura de l'esprit,
Hors nous, et nos amis."†

But while the king remains firm and true to his sentiments and attachments, no ties less pure disturb the mo-

* "Toutes les dames de la Reine font la compagnie de Madame de Montespan; on y joue tour à tour; rien n'est caché, rien n'est secret. *Lettres de Sevigné*, vol. iii.

† A particular friend of Mad. P——, in defending her from these malicious imputations, said to me, "as to the king's visits to Mad. de P——, it is not possible. He could not enter the door of her little apartment; and such is her timidity, that when he addresses at court, '*le rouge lui tombe de la joue*.'" Perfectly convinced myself of the innocence of the parties, I submit these proofs to the consideration of ultra-scepticism.

ral propriety of his court; and the royal family, it is observed, exhibit "*un sublime et touchant tableau de toutes les vertus publiques et privées.*"* No Mad. du Barrès now usurp a place "behind the throne, greater than the throne." Even bishops, who have long lived in holy wedlock with their revolutionary wives, have discarded them;† and laymen, who for many years have lived without their *chères moitiés*, have been obliged to take them back.‡ All "*liaisons dangereuses*" are banished from a court, where piety and politics have usurped the place of gallantry and the graces; as *les petits ramoneurs* once showed their sooty faces on the fans of French belles, instead of "*the loves*," whom they had dethroned.

While, however, these two factions are engaged in frivolous discussions and puerile contests, in which their own interests and their own vanities alone hold any concern, the rest of the nation beholds in indignant silence their usurpation of all places of honour, emolument, and importance. It is the ancient noblesse alone, who are sent into foreign countries to represent the land they have so long abandoned, and with whose existing principles and character their own can never assimilate. It is the adherents of the *old régime*, who command in the army, who lead in the senate; and those, who for twenty-five years have been armed

* See *Annales Politiques*, August 19, 1816.

† When Mad. Talleyrand returned to France, to enforce the fulfilment of the conditions which induced her to submit to a separation from her right reverend lord, the king was graciously pleased to be jocular on the occasion with his *grand chambellan*. "*Oui, Sire,*" replied Mons. T. "*son retour est pour moi un vingt de Mars.*" (The day of Napoleon's return from Elba.)

‡ Mons. Chateaubriand is said to be among the number of these "*mar-tires.*"

against France, now decide her fate, and rule over her vigorous population, upon principles and systems, whose abolition she had purchased with her blood, through a long and painful term of suffering, of conflict, and of misery.

* * * * *

The society of Paris, after the second restoration of the Bourbons, appearing half in *shade* and half in *relief*, is not inaptly imaged by that condition of the moon, in which, although her whole orb be visible, the effulgence of her light proceeds only from a part. While the *royaliste pur* and the *royaliste exagéré* buzz, and bustle, and flutter on the scene, warmed into animation by the rays of princely protection, or of royal favour; all who cannot claim these distinguishing epithets, "preserve the noiseless tenor of their way," and (to borrow a phrase of Cowley) "lead a life, as it were, by stealth."

This unclassed, but suspected order, generally under the *surveillance* of the police, and often little better than prisoners to their own porters and valets, have, by some fatal experiences, been broken into circumspection; and, in general, society are cautious not to risk opinions which might unavailingly incur the penalty of exile, or perhaps of death. A certain tone of pleasant *équivoque*, however, pervades their conversation, an ambushed raillery, which well supplies the place of bitter invective, or of whining complaint. How often, and how willingly, have I hastened to one of their "*petits comités sous la rose*," from some catacomb circle, where each monumental member spoke in his turn, or was called to order, if he infringed on the prescribed *regularity* of the conversation!—With what pleasure have I flown to some forbidden ground, where, in the hallowed circle of amity and confidence,

wit and *genius* exercised their proscribed witcheries;* where talents, which were even then, under various forms, delighting the world, and pursuing their golden course to immortality, reserved some of their brightest beams to illumine the passing moments of private intercourse; and where names were re-echoed, destined to live for ever, and already traced in the luminous rolls of splendid celebrity! This indeed, was a society often "dream'd of in my philosophy," but never counted upon in my expectations. These were hours over which weariness held no jurisdiction; and every sand in the glass turned to gold, as it fell.

The society of Paris, taken as a whole, and including all parties and factions, is infinitely superior in point of taste, acquirement, and courtesy, to that of the capital of any other nation. Paris, the elysium of men of letters, has always been the resort of foreigners of literary, scientific, and political eminence; and princes and potentates, who have influenced the destinies of nations, are seen mingling in her circles with the more valuable characters of Europe, whose works and names are dei-

* "The world," said one of the most celebrated men of Europe, to me, "is divided into *five* parts; the *four old* quarters, and *les gens d'esprit*; and this *fifth* division is now placed on the list of proscription." "Who is that person?" asked the Duke D——s, pointing out a gentleman who had excited his attention by observations, somewhat bold, on a political subject of conversation. "*C'es un homme d'esprit*," was the reply. "Bon," added the Duc. "*Je vois bien qu'il n'est pas des nôtres*."

It is to the father of this nobleman, that the following anecdote is attributed. Being appointed to direct the festivities for the marriage of the Count d'Artois, it was suggested to him, that an epithalamium was indispensable; and a person was recommended, to perform the job. Upon his consenting to this arrangement, the poet waited upon him for his directions, in what manner it should be got up. "*Ma foi*," he replied, "*je n'en sais rien; qu'il soit de velours vert, brodé d'or, comme les autres meubles!*"

ined to reach posterity, when titles of higher sound shall be forgotten, and the Humbolts, the Playfairs, the Davys, the Castis, the Canovas, now succeed, in the Parisian salons, to the Sternes, the Humes, the Walpoles, and Algarottis of other times. The talent for conversation so conspicuous in France among all classes, originating, perhaps, in the rapidity of perception and facility of combination of the people, was early perfected by institutes, which, prohibiting an interference in matters of government, determined the powers of national intellect to subjects of social discussion, and tasteful analysis.

In the days of the beautiful and unfortunate Marie Antoinette, the splendid court which surrounded her, opposing itself to the *philosophers*, who brought strength and energy into fashion, reduced the whole vocabulary of *bon-ton*, as an elegant courtier of that day assured me, to about twenty or thirty words; and whoever presumed to exceed the stated boundary, was stigmatised as a *bel esprit* and a *philasophe*. The revolution has added much to the strength of conversation, without having sacrificed either precision or *finesse*; and "*converser bien*," to be a "*bon raconteur*," is as sure a passport to the best society at this moment, as it was in the days of Louis XV.

La Marquise de V——, enumerating to me one day the celebrated persons who formed her *soirées*, before the revolution, dwelt with many touches of pathos upon Champfort, who had been amongst the number; and she concluded, in a tone of great emotion, "*Ah, madame, j'ai perdu en lui mon meilleur——*." She paused for an instant, and I was about to fill up the break, which feel

ing had made, with the word "*ami*;" but she repeated, "*J'ai perdu en lui mon meilleur causeur !*"

Excellent *raconteurs* are to be met with in every society of Paris; and I have listened with wonder and admiration to the humour, facility, and point, with which tale after tale has been delivered, anecdotes related, and stories invented, for the amusement of a circle, where every member bore his part, and where all played in their turn a willing audience, and all were equal to an amusing exhibition. That "melancholy and gentlemanlike" pleasantry, produced in English society under the name of *quizzing*, is a sort of "*maudlin mirth*" unknown in the circles of Paris; while ridicule, always dreaded, and ably wielded, falls almost exclusively upon *unfounded* pretension. Taste, as referable to the ordinances of society, is here so deeply studied, so well defined in her rules, and so thoroughly understood in her principles, that the decisions of temporary modes have but little influence on opinion. As far as I could observe, although a certain light *persiflage* was much the fashion, nothing was ridiculed, but what was *strictly ridiculous*.

The mind, thus permitted to take its utmost stretch, is neither restrained by fashion, nor clouded by *ennui*, and a licensed discussion of all subjects is granted to those, who are known to be wearisome upon none. Admiration for talent is indeed as universal, as is the intelligence which appreciates it. Not a ray falls unreflected; not a point drops unfelt; all is *rebound* and elasticity. The society, like the climate, is bright and genial; and it is the peculiar and united influence of both, to set the mind and the blood into rapid circulation, to lighten

humanity of half the ills of its inheritance, to enhance its pleasures, and multiply its enjoyments.

But while private society still preserves its delightful character, the existing order of things occasionally interferes with its recreations; and the vigilant police sometimes obtrudes itself on the pleasures, even of those who have nothing to dread from its discoveries. Leaving, at a late hour, an elegant and brilliant circle, in the *Rue Ville Evêque*, in the fresh impression of my admiration, I was lamenting that all my hours were not so passed, that a short time would convey me far from the scene of such enjoyment, when a number of soldiers, rushing from beneath the shade of a high wall, surrounded the carriage, and seized the reins. Bastilles, *lettres de cachet*, mysterious arrestations, and solitary confinements, started upon my scared imagination, and I had already classed myself with the iron masque, and caged Mazarine; with the Wilsons, Hutchinsons, and Bruces, as I rapidly went over my possible peccadillos of *lèse-majesté*, when the leader of the military vociferated: *Qui sont ces Messieurs?*" and ordered the windows of the carriage to be let down. Our French servant, who was probably himself one of the police, immediately entered upon the defensive, and declared that we were English persons returning to their hotel, from the Marquis de C——'s; adding significantly: "*vous vous trompez, mes amis.*" After a little muttering among the party, they drew back to their station under the wall, and we passed on, with feelings similar to those of the country mouse; for though I acknowledged that "my lord alone knew how to live," still I could not help exclaiming;

"Give me again my hollow tree,

"My crust of bread—and liberty."

As we drove on, I observed a fiacre pass us, and looking out of the window, perceived that it was stopped and surrounded, as we had been. The next morning we learned that the police had been in search of suspected persons,* and our servant suggested that they were most likely concealed in the quarter where we had visited; "for it is in the Rue d'Anjou (he added) that *the two Queens live.*"†

Amidst all the suspicion and distrust; which the weakness and vigilant jealousy of the present government are so well calculated to excite, in private society, each particular circle yields itself up to a freedom of discussion, which an entire confidence in the honour of its members can alone explain, or justify. The royalists abuse the *ultras*; the *ultras* abuse the government; the constitutionalists laugh at both, and just stopping short of treason, exercise their wit and their satire against the dominant parties, in songs, epigrams, anecdotes and *bon-mots*.

It has frequently occurred to me to have witnessed the most opposite discussions, and listened to the most contradictory opinions, in the course of the same evening; assisting at a royalist dinner, drinking *ultra* tea, and supping *en républicaine*. I have thus graduated on the political scale, from the extreme of loyalty to the last de-

* We have occasionally seen the houses of suspected persons guarded by soldiers, while the unfortunate inmates were undergoing a scrutiny.

† The Queen of Spain and her sister, who is queen of—I forget when

gree of rebellion. I was at a concert at the house of the charming Mad. de Beaumont, the very *Muse of royalism*; and (almost won over to a cause recommended by her elegant compositions) I was joining in the chorus of "*Vive le roi, quand même*," when I was reminded of an engagement I had made with a society of another stamp and metal; and I departed reluctantly, leaving many a gallant "*chevalier de la bonne cause*" rapturously applauding the following loyal effusions, composed, played, and sung, by their lovely hostess.

PREUX CHEVALIER VEUT MOURIR POUR SON ROI.

Preux chevalier, la gloire vous appelle,
L'honneur vous dit de marcher sous sa loi ;
Vous le jurez, vous lui serez fidèle,
Preux chevalier veut mourir pour son roi. (bis.)

Au loin déjà la trompette sonore,
Dans tous les cœurs a causé grand émoi ;
Chant du départ, vous le redit encore :
Preux chevalier veut mourir pour son roi. (bis.)

Adieu, plaisirs, amour ; adieu, douce amie ;
Adieu ces lieux, où je reçus ta foi ;
Cache tes pleurs, idole de ma vie !
Preux chevalier veut mourir pour son roi. (bis.)

Le chevalier, sous la blanche bannière,
Brulant d'ardeur, au loin répand l'effroi,
En effrontant les hazards de la guerre,
Preux chevalier veut mourir pour son roi. (bis.)

L'air retentit du cri de la victoire ;
Et du vainqueur tout a subi la loi.
Il fut heureux, par l'amour et la gloire,
Ce chevalier, qui servit bien son roi. (bis.)

With this melodized loyalty, still breathing on my ear, I arrived in the anti-room of the hotel where I was to sup; and while I was unshawling, I caught the first stanzas of the following song, which my presence did not interrupt, and which, given with infinite humour, was received with rapturous plaudits, warm and sincere as those bestowed on "*Preux chevalier veut mourir pour son Roi.*"

Ca n'tiendra pas.

Comme il faut prendre, en philosophe,
Les accidens fâcheux et bons,
J'ai supporté la catastrophe,
Qui nous ramena les Bourbons.
Pour me trouver sous leur passage,
J'ai même fait deux ou trois pas,
Mais je me suis dit, "*c'est dommage,*"
Ca n'tiendra pas, ça n'tiendra pas.

Quand Berri, D'Artois, D'Angoulême
De ville en ville ont colporté,
Des héritiers du diadème
La dilittanté Trinité.
Ils se donnoient pour des grands Princes;
Mais bientôt chacun dit, tout bas,
Pour leurs grandeurs, ils sont trop minces;
Ca n'tiendra pas, ça n'tiendra pas.

Il voudroit régner sur la France
Ce Roi, qui parmi des Français,
Osa dire avec insolence :
" *Je dois ma Couronne aux Anglais.*"

" *Je reconnais, qu' après Dieu, c'est au Prince Régent, que je dois ma Couronne.*"

This public declaration was a deep wound to the honour of the nation, and is thus alluded to in one of the best pamphlets of the day. "Horribles paroles ! gravées trop profondément dans le cœur de tous les Français, et qu'il est inutile de commenter."

Ah ! puisse encore la France entière
Dire, en la brisant en éclat,
Si tu la dois à l'Angleterre,
Ça n'tiendra pas, ça n'tiendra pas."

Je ris tout haut de la jactance
De tous ces saquins d'émigrés,
Qui, *par peur*, ont quitté la France;
Et qui, *par faim*, y sont rentrés.
Pauvre petit-fils de Henri Quatre !
Peux tu compter sur ces pieds-plats ?
Pour toi, quand il faudra se battre,
Ça n'tiendra pas, ça n'tiendra pas.

On prodigue avec insolence
Ces rubans, ces marques d'honneur,
Que l'on arrache de la vaillance,
Au vrai mérite, à la valeur.
De ce tort on peut vous absoudre ;
Ces croix, ces rubans, ces crachats ;
Messieurs, vous avez beau les coudre,
Ça, n'tiendra pas, ça n'tiendra pas.

The Emperor Julian declared that he most admired, in his favourite Gauls, that gravity of character, which resembled his own. And though it may appear an affectation of singularity, to agree in this imperial opinion, as applied to the modern French, yet in all circles, among all classes, both in public and in private, I was struck with the tone of quietude and seriousness, the capability of profound and sustained attention, distinguishable equally in the parterres of their theatres, and the circles of their saloons. That wild exuberance of gaiety, that boisterous overflowing of animal spirits, found even under the sombre influence of our own less genial clime, is rarely or never seen in France. The gaiety of the French appeared to me, not more a constitutional than an intellectual vivacity ; a sort of moral

energy, a prompt, though not a profound sensibility, which gives spirit to their manners, animation to their countenances, and force to their gesticulation. I have occasionally joined a circle of persons that looked

“ like their grandsires, cut in alabaster,”

until some subject of interesting discussion was accidentally introduced ; and then every eye lighted up, every countenance brightened, and all became animated in gesture, and forcible in expression. The virtue of temperament most peculiarly French, is that even show of perpetual cheerfulness, which, whatever may be its cause and origin, is most gracious in its effects and influence ; which throws a ray even on their gravity, and is infinitely more delightful than their seemingly automation vivacity.

The circles of fashion, in Paris, are characterized by a formality in their arrangement, to which their sedentary propensities in all ranks greatly contribute. Nobody is loco-motive, from a love of motion ; there are no professed loungers, nor habitual walkers.—Every body sits or reclines, when, where, and as often as he can ; and chairs are provided not only for those who resort to the public gardens, but also in the streets, along the most fashionable Boulevards, and before all the *cafés* and *estaminets*, which are farmed out at a very moderate price. The promenade of persons of fashion is merely a seat in the air. They drive to the gardens of the Thuilleries, alight from their carriages, and immediately take their seat under the shade of the noblest groves of chesnuts, or in the perfumed atmosphere of roses and orange trees,

In the gardens of the Luxembourg, swarms of the ancient inhabitants of that old-fashioned quarter, come forth with their primitive looks, antiquated costume and pet animals, to take their accustomed seats every evening, and remain in endless *causerie*, enjoying their favourite recreation in this lovely spot, until the shades of night send them home to their elevated lodgings, "*au quatrième*." The circles of the ancient *noblesse* are formal and precise, to a degree that imposes perpetual restraint; the ladies are all seated *à la ronde*; the gentlemen either leaning on the back of their chairs, or separated into small compact groups. Every body rises at the entrance of a new guest, and immediately resumes a seat, which is never finally quitted until the moment of departure. There is no bustling, no gliding, no shifting of place for purposes of coquetry, or views of flirtation; all is repose and quietude among the most animated and cheerful people in the world. My restlessness and activity was a source of great astonishment and amusement: my walking constantly in the streets and public gardens, and my having nearly made the tour of Paris, on foot, were cited as unprecedented events in the history of female perambulation.

Coming in very late one night, to a grand *réunion*, I made my excuse, by pleading the fatigue I had encountered during the day; and I enumerated the different quarters of the town I had walked over, the public places I had visited, the sights I had seen, and the cards I had dropped.—I perceived my fair auditress listening to me at first with incredulous attention; then "panting after me in vain," through all my movements, losing breath, changing colour, till at last she exclaimed:

"Tenez, madama, je n'en puis plus. Encore un pas, et je n'en reviendrai, de plus de quinze jours?"

This love of sedentary ease struck me most particularly, at court. At one of the receptions of the Dutchess de Berri (held at the *Elysée Bourbon*), we were detained longer than had been expected in an anti-room, waiting the arrival of her royal highness from the Thuilleries, where she dined with the king. There were a great many ladies, and but few seats. On every side were to be heard, "*Ah, seigneur dieu! que c'est ennuyeux! Comment peut-on se tenir debout, comme ça? Madame, je meurs de fatigue,*" &c. &c. A few nights before, at the play given at the Thuilleries, several ladies, extremely well accommodated as I thought, left their places, in search of others, where they might be more at their ease; while English ladies of the highest rank were pushing and squeezing, and standing, too happy to be admitted, on any terms, to witness the spectacle of a court play, performed in the magnificent theatre, which recalls all the splendour, and much more than the elegance of the famous *salle des machines* of Louis XIV.

The formality however of those circles, in which it is the fashion to reflect the manners of the *ancien régime*, is not universal. There are many sets and societies, in the immense range of Parisian company, in which the most perfect ease prevails; where it is permitted to sit, or stand, or lounge, to put the *feet on the fender, or the elbow on the table*, as repose may dictate, or familiarity induce; where the lady of the house does not *positively* insist that her guest must occupy the distinguished *bergère*, nor shudders at the vulgar choice of an humble

"*chaise de paille*;" where each person is left to consult his own ease, according to the dictates of his own feelings, without reference to rules of etiquette, or to the established "*bon-ton de la parfaitement bonne compagnie*."

The great attraction and cement of society, in France, is conversation; and, generally speaking, all forms and arrangements tend towards its promotion. No rival splendors, no ostentatious display, no indiscriminate multitude make a part of its scheme. The talents, which lend their charm to social communion, are estimated far beyond the rank that might dignify, or the magnificence that might adorn it. In the salon, "Virgil would take his place with Augustus, and Voltaire with Condé." I have seen Denon and Humbolt received with delight, where princes and ministers were beheld with indifference.

"Et des hommes tels qu'eux marchent à côté des souverains."

The societies of Paris have not yet admitted the necessity of Lions, to keep *ennui* from the door, and to give stimulus to the promptly-exhausted attention of fashionable inanity. The *Dehli-Lamas* of *haut ton*, who yawn away their existence in the assemblies of London, are as unknown in Paris, as those intellectual jugglers, who play off their "quips and cranks," for the amusement of prosperous dulness, or those more manual artists, who "*tumble*" themselves into fashionable notoriety, and who frequently, without recompense, as without esteem, "strut their hour upon the stage, and then are heard no more."

Knowledge indeed is so much diffused, and a taste for scientific investigation so strenuously cultivated, in

France, that judgment seems to approach the precision of mathematical certainty ; and the natural tact of the people, the quickness of their perception, thus strengthened by cultivation, leaves pretension hopeless of success. There invariably "*le savoir dans un fat, devient impertinence.*" Many foreign charlatans, who have been for a time countenanced in England, and crowned with complete success in Ireland, have been the public laugh of Paris, the amusement of idlers, and the contempt of the learned.

* * * * *

"*Engagez vos sujets à se marier le plutôt possible,*" is the political ordinance of a French writer, strictly obeyed in France. The youth of both sexes marry now, as formerly, much earlier than in England ; and without pausing to consider the effects of such premature unions, upon moral and political life, it is very obvious that the pleasures of private society gain materially by the change. No manœuvring mothers, nor candidate daughters, appear upon the scene bent exclusively on canvassing for a matrimonial election,* *hérissontes* with maternal *amour-propre*, or agitated by fears of rivalry, or hopes of conquest. No cautious heir, suspicious of *undue influence*, wraps himself up in the safety of silence, and in the affectation of neglect, whispering his nothings into the ear of his equally cautious companions, and violating every form of good breeding, by a strict observance of the rules—of *prudent reserve*. Young unmarried women, indeed, seldom appear in society, ex-

* An heiress by no means makes the same sensation, in France, as amongst us ; because it is generally understood that suitable arrangements have been made for her establishment, before she appears in public.

cept in the domestic circle, or at the *bals-parés*, which are sufficiently numerous in the gay season of Paris, to afford ample sources of pleasure and dissipation, and which beginning and ending early, and being devoted to their graceful and elegant dances, are infinitely more calculated for youthful recreation than the late hours and unwholesome crowds of London assemblies, where youth so soon loses its spirit and its bloom, and where the often exhibited beauty grows stale on the sickly eye of fashion, before it has accomplished the end of its annual and nightly exhibitions.*

Marriages are still pretty generally arranged by the prudence and foresight of *les bons parents*; but daughters are no longer shut up in convents, till the day of their nuptials; nor are they condemned to behold for the first time their husband and their lover, almost at the same moment. Educated chiefly at home, they mingle with the customary guests of the maternal circle, from which the companion of their future life is not unfrequently chosen; and since inclination is never violated, nor repugnance resisted, it must often happen among the young, the pleasing, and the susceptible, that duty and preference may go together, and obedience know that "*il est doux de trouver, dans un amant qu'on aime, un époux que l'on doit aimer.*" To this may be added, that a young French woman, like a young English woman, may forward parental ambition, by her own aspiring views, and "*donner dans la seigneurie,*"

* Very young girls do not, in general, frequent the *soirées*, or mere conversational societies, because they do not themselves desire it. To balls and to concerts they go at a much earlier age, than is usual in England; and there is no decided period for "*coming out.*" No unmarried woman, of any age, can go to court,

with a ready recantation of the romantic dogma of "love in a cottage," which in the end frequently turns out to be a cottage, without love.

The French youth of both sexes, of the present generation, are peculiarly distinguished by all the genuine and delightful characteristics of that most delightful period of human existence. Spirited, energetic, frank, and communicative, they have found the order of things, under which they have been brought up, peculiarly favourable to their moral development. The military and the scientific education of the young men have acted mutually and favourably upon each other; adding to force and activity, a just appreciation of scientific knowledge, and destroying that false estimate of useless and frivolous acquirements, which made the merit and the charm of the *abbés* and *petit-maitres* of the old regime. None of these fluttering insects now appear, hovering round the toilette, and swarming at the levées of beauty; hisping their critiques on patches and poetry, deciding with importance on a tragedy or a cosmetic, and claiming it as an equal distinction, to judge the merits of an epigram, or pronounce on the flounce of a petticoat. Of these "unfinished things" not a trace remains; and I have seen the sudden appearance of a London "*dandy*" make as great a sensation in a French assembly, by its novelty and incomprehensibility, as when the *ornithosynchus paradoxus* came to confound the systems, and dislocate the arrangements of the naturalists, at the *jardin des plantes*.

I was one evening in the apartment of the Princesse de Volkonski (a Russian lady,) awaiting the commencement of one of her pretty Italian operas, when one of

these "fashion-mongering boys," as Beatrice calls them; newly arrived in Paris, appeared at the door of the salon, flushed with the conscious pride of the toilette, and reconnoitring the company through his glass. I had the honour to be recognized by him; he approached and half yawned, half articulated some enquiries, which he did not wait to be answered, but drawled on to somebody else, whom he distinguished with his notice. A very pleasant little French woman, the daughter of the Comte de L-s-ge, was talking to me, when my English *merveilleux* joined us. Mad. de V—— stared at him with unsated curiosity and evident amusement; and when he had passed on, asked, "*mais qu' est-ce que cela veut dire ?*" I answered, "*C' est un dandi !*"

"*Un dandi !*" she repeated, "*un dandi ! c' est donc un genre parmi vous, qu' un dandi ?*"

I replied, "no; rather *a variety in the species.*" I endeavoured to describe a *dandy* to her, as well as it would bear definition; asking her, whether there was no *pendant* for it in French society? "*Mais, mon Dieu, oui ;*" she replied, "*nos jeunes duchesses sont à-peu-près des dandis.*"*

A few days after this exhibition of *dandyism*, I met with another of the tribe in the hotel of the Baron Denon. He was a young diplomatist, and added the weight of official solemnity to the usual foppery of a *merveilleux*. Associating only with his own spy-glass, he pass-

* I was told that many of the young dutchesses, who now claim the supreme privilege of the "*di Vine tabouret, et qui se traduisent en ridicule, malgré leur qualité,*" assume an air of superiority over the less privileged classes, which I suppose induced a French gentleman to observe to me, as the Dutchess de —— passed by us: "*De toutes nos jeunes duchesses, voilà, la plus insolente.*"

ed with languid indifference from one object to another, in the splendid collection he had been brought to see; but without *once* noticing, by word or look, the eminent and celebrated person, who was so much more worthy of attention, than even the treasures he possessed. M. Denon, too much amused to be hurt by this want of good manners in his guest, followed him, with a look of pleased attention. I could almost trace in his eye a desire to place this modern curiosity among his Chinese josses, and bamboo pagodas. When this rare specimen of "*quaint fashions of the times*" took his leave, Mons. D—— exclaimed with a smile, and a shrug of the shoulders: "*Quel drôle de corps qu'un dandi!*" I was surprised to find that the Egyptian traveller had so far extended his study of the human character, as to discover at once an English *dandy*, by its generic character.

By those accustomed to the systematic politeness and ceremonious courtesy of the old regime, the military youth of France are accused of a *brusquerie*, a certain force and bluntness of manner, foreign to the national urbanity. It is most certain that "*les graces*" do not now receive that homage, which the "*petits marquis, à talons rouges*," offered on their altars in former times. Boys are no longer studied in the "sad ostent" of idle compliment. Few *petits-bons-hommes* of eight years old would address their handsome mother, like the little Duc de Maine, and exclaim, "*vous êtes belle comme un ange!*" The élèves of the polytechnic schools, and of the Lycées, have more of the careless boldness, which distinguishes the manly pupils of Westminster and Harrow, than the "*petits soins*" and "*jolies tournures*," with which the little Richelieus won hearts and ruined reputations, at fifteen. And though these young, and

generally ardent votaries of science possess less erudition, and are less grounded in classical lore, than the profound scholars of Cambridge, or the elegant students of Oxford, they are still far more extensively acquainted with every branch of useful knowledge, with history, science, and philosophy, than the best of their predecessors, under the ancient regime. If fewer Arnauds, Daciers, and La Mottes are to be expected from the rising generation, the schools of science promise abundance of worthy* successors to the D'Alemberts, the Diderots, the Cabanis, the Bichats, the La Places, the Bertholets, and the Cuviers.

The belles-lettres of their national literature seem to come to the French youth, as reading and writing did to *Touchstone*, by nature. Persons of all classes quote the popular authors of the last hundred years, as if they had imbibed their effusions with their first nourishment, and no one is ashamed to write like a man of letters; nor, however high his rank, confines himself to the "*style d'un homme de qualité*."†

The law of conscription, and still more the personal influence which Napoleon exerted over the higher ranks, by inducing or by forcing their sons, at an early age, into the army, much interrupted the course of education, and checked the progress of elegant acquirement. But in all ages, and under all reigns, the

* There is no circumstance, in the appearance of the National Institute, more striking and more interesting, than the vast proportion of young men, who have forced themselves, by superior talent, within its walls.

† A phrase much in fashion, before the revolution, was "*écrire en homme de qualité*." "*C'est dommage que la révolution terrisse la source de tous ces bons ridicules*," says a modern satirist.

army was the hereditary profession of the young French nobility; and the elder sons were as invariably *général*s and colonels, as the *cadets* were prelates and abbés. I can, however, on my own experience attest the ardour with which the young men of the highest rank, civil and military, return to their studies, from which they had been forcibly estranged. I have known the young heirs to the most distinguished names in modern celebrity, to the most illustrious titles in historic record, not less regular and assiduous attendants on the daily lectures of Cuvier, St. Fond, Fourcroy, Haüy, than those who have to subsist by the exercise of their acquired talents.

It is this attention to scientific and philosophical research, which occupies so generally the mornings of young Frenchmen, and throws an imputation on the capital, that there are few gentleman-like persons to be seen in its streets. It is quite true that the young men in their black stocks and shabby hats, hurrying from lecture to lecture,* hastening to catch the hours of one public library, or to overtake those of another, whether on foot, in their "*Bogey*s *Anglaises*," or in their own ill-appointed *cabriolets*, are by no means so ornamental to a great city, as those "neat and trimly dressed" votaries of English fashion, who, for the benefit of the public, and their own gratification, parade their persons and their *ennui*, at stated hours, in stated places; who preside over the folds of a neckcloth, or dictate the varnish which should illustrate a boot. Street exhi-

* The number of public institutions, established and supported by government for national education, all well attended, are a sufficient proof of the universal diffusion of knowledge, and of the general application to study of the rising generation.

bition is, indeed, wholly unknown in Paris; and no man, young or old, founds his celebrity on rivalling his own coachman, or upon the superior excellence and appointment of his *turn-out*. The extreme on the other side of the question amounts, indeed, too frequently to the ludicrous; and the point of preference must be left to the umpire of those, who are interested in, and adequate to the discussion.

The settlement of the French government, under the imperial reign, produced that public calm, which is favourable to the return of the long-scattered lights of science and learning; and public instruction was re-assumed with a vigour and universality, almost unprecedented in any other country. The regime of the *Lycées* comprehended the study of literature, ancient and modern, the mathematical and physical sciences, as they apply to general life and to professions. To these branches were added the modern languages; and six years was the time fixed for the studies of the pupil.*

The polytechnic school, devoted to the mathematical, physical, and chemical sciences, and to the graphic arts, was destined to form and educate pupils for the service of the nation.† How well, and how willingly the young *élèves* fulfilled the intentions of the legislature, in its foundation, was evinced during the struggle which France made against the arms of Europe, in 1815;

* The number of *écoles, prytanées, lycées, écoles, spéciales, collèges, académies*, and institutes, which succeeded to the ten colleges "*de pleine exercice*," where the French and Latin languages were taught, with theology, law, medicine, and the arts, are countless. Theology alone is a sufferer, by the abolition of the ancient seminaries.

† Napoleon latterly excited the jealousy of the pupils of the polytechnic school, by the exclusive attention he paid to the military school at St. Cyr.

when this little band of boyish heroes defended the heights of *Monte-Marte*, with an energy of spirit, a desperation of courage, and a display of skill, which would have consecrated any cause; and which recalled the youthful bands of Sparta, fighting in honourable and dear alliance for glory and for death.*

I have at this moment before my eyes one of these "veteran youths," as I once beheld him, describing the evacuation of Paris by the French troops; and never did the mind create a finer vision of self-devoted patriotism, with all the harmonizing attributes of spirit, grace, eloquence, and passion. He spoke of the Emperor, merely as a great captain, worthy of the devotion of his soldiers, by his personal bravery and military genius.—"But," added he, "it was not for *him* we fought—it was for the fast-eclipsing glory of France that we struggled; and even, when all seemed lost, to *others*, hope still remained to *us*! The troops, afflicted, but not discouraged, even when the barriers of Paris were forced, were still eager to rally, to save the country, or to die upon the bayonets of the enemy. But shameful degradation, not glorious death, awaited them: they were hunted out of Paris, and ordered by the command of foreigners, to retire to the lonely destination of their ignoble retreat. Oh! then, what passions

* Suddenly called from their classes into service, with only the benefit of a few weeks' exercise and discipline, to prepare them for the arduous conflict, they were appointed to serve the artillery, destined to cover the approach to their positions; and they strewed the spot with the bodies of the enemy, defending their post till the barriers could no longer be protected. Great numbers of them were found dead upon the guns they had so gallantly worked.

agitated the breasts of the brave, when the death they supplicated was denied them !”

He paused, and added, in a hurried tone, “The march of the troops, through the streets of Paris, was characterized by all the fiercest wildness of despair, and was witnessed by its weeping population with sympathetic emotion. The men flung down their arms, and refused to obey their officers; they tore their hair, they rent their garments—courage unsubdued, spirits unbroken, indignation unrestrained, shame unconcealed, all mingled, all betrayed their symptoms in their distracted movements; and their cries became howls, when, for the last time, they were drawn beyond the barriers of that proud city, which their arms and blood had nearly made the mistress of the world !”

“You witnessed, then, the scene ?” I asked, affected by the emotions of the young narrator.

“*Si je l’ai vu !*” he exclaimed, his eyes flashing fire through the tears that gushed from them. “*Madame, je suis moi-même un brigand de la Loire !*”

He had, in fact, only returned to his family a few weeks before. Should the high-minded Mad. de B-s-re find in this slight sketch a resemblance to her gallant son, she will judge of the impression made on my mind by the character, spirit, and eloquence of the original.

But, while monasteries and convents now rise on every side; while *Ursulines* and *Carmelites* again revive and multiply by royal ordinance, and by princely encouragement, the Polytechnic School is no more. Nor could the bravery, spirit, and devotion of its pupils save it from that degradation, with which all institutions, marked by the energy and character of the age, are overwhelmed in the new order of administration.

Even the course of female education, so obviously improved within the last thirty years, has received a new direction, and assumes the character of the rules and ordinances of the convent of St. Cyr. The accomplished woman,* formerly at the head of the national seminaries, for the education of female youth, are now either displaced, to make way for pious abbesses, or obliged to adopt vows and rules, perfectly monastic.

The *maison d'éducation* at Ecoeu, where three hundred daughters of military men, and public functionaries were educated, has recently undergone a change that amounts to its dissolution; and during the time that I was at Paris, a pitched battle was said to have taken place, between the few of its original pupils, who still remained, and the host of young royalists and emigrant ladies, who have recently filled up its ranks. I was assured that their missile contest rivalled, in force and energy, the celebrated conclave battle, when cardinals laid aside arguments for blows, and ink-horns flew where hypothesis had resounded.

Talking over this curious circumstance to an old royalist lady, who had two daughters* at Ecoeu, she exclaimed, "*Pour ces jeunes Buonapartistes, ce sont des petites vipères à étouffer!*" The same lady assured me, that having placed her son in a military school immediately after the king's arrival in 1814, the conflict of political principles ran so high, between the royalist and Buonapartist boys, that she was obliged to withdraw her son, in terror for his limbs or his life.

*I believe the former directress *en chef* of the school of the Legion of Honour, was Mad. de Campau, widow of the celebrated Gen. Campau.

The change, in the female seminaries of education, are said to be affected by the pious zeal and active interference of Mad. La Duchesse d'Angoulême, who personally interests herself in the nomination of both pupils and directresses. Other Madame de Glapions* are now sought for, zealous and severe as the charming actress of *Mordecai*, to restore rules, which she alone could preserve among the rather restive young ladies of St. Cyr, whose wanderings and ecstasies on *divine love*† forced the illustrious foundress to declare, "*J'aimerois mieux avoir à gouverner un empire.*"

This union of tent-stitch and faith, of dogmas and doctrines, with nouns and pronouns, excites, on the part of the *ultras*, boundless admiration for the royal personage, who revives a mode of education long exploded,

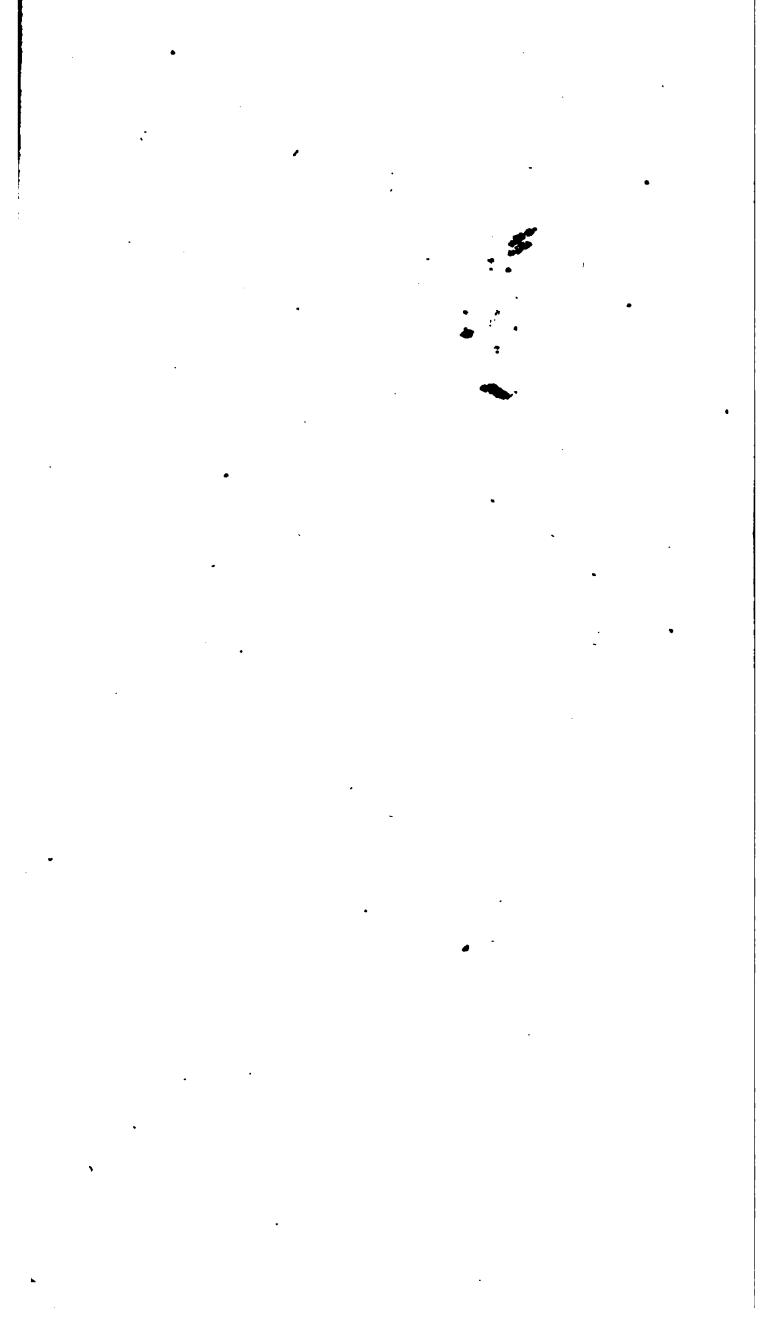
* Mad. de Glapion, superior of St. Cyr, seems to have owed her distinction and elevation to her performance of *Mordecai*, the Jew, in one of the pious tragedies acted by the young novices of that institution, for the amusement of the king and the court.

There was a malicious report, when I was at Paris, among the anti-royalists, that Monsieur Chateaubriand's M. S. tragedy of "*Moses*," which has been so often read in private society, is *to be got up* by the young ladies of Ecouen, by permission of Madame, in imitation of the *Esther* and *Alhalie* of Racine. "*Des voix pures et virginales*," as Mad. de Suard calls the singers of St. Cyr, are to chant the chorusses of *Moses*, which are said to resemble, in figurative ardor, the Songs of Solomon; and the saintly, though laical, *author himself* is to perform the part of *Moses*, and to lead his fair tribe to the land of promise.

† The *divine love* of Mad. Guyon had such an effect on the young ladies of St. Cyr, and her "*court moyen*" exerted so powerful an influence, that, says their elegant historian, "*on étoit en contemplation, on avoit des extases; le gout pour l'oraison devenoit si puissant, que tous les devoirs étoient négligés!*"

The result then of this over-strained piety and religious observance, seems only to have been the neglecting of imperious duties, and the substitution of *eraisons* for practical virtues.

and which had certainly no influence on female morals, as the conduct of the Chateauroux and de Priés, and the Mancinis evince. But upon all occasions the *ultras* merit the eulogium, applied to them by the deputy of Rouen, "*Messieurs, je vous trouve toujours plus royal que le Roi, et plus religieux que le Pape.*"



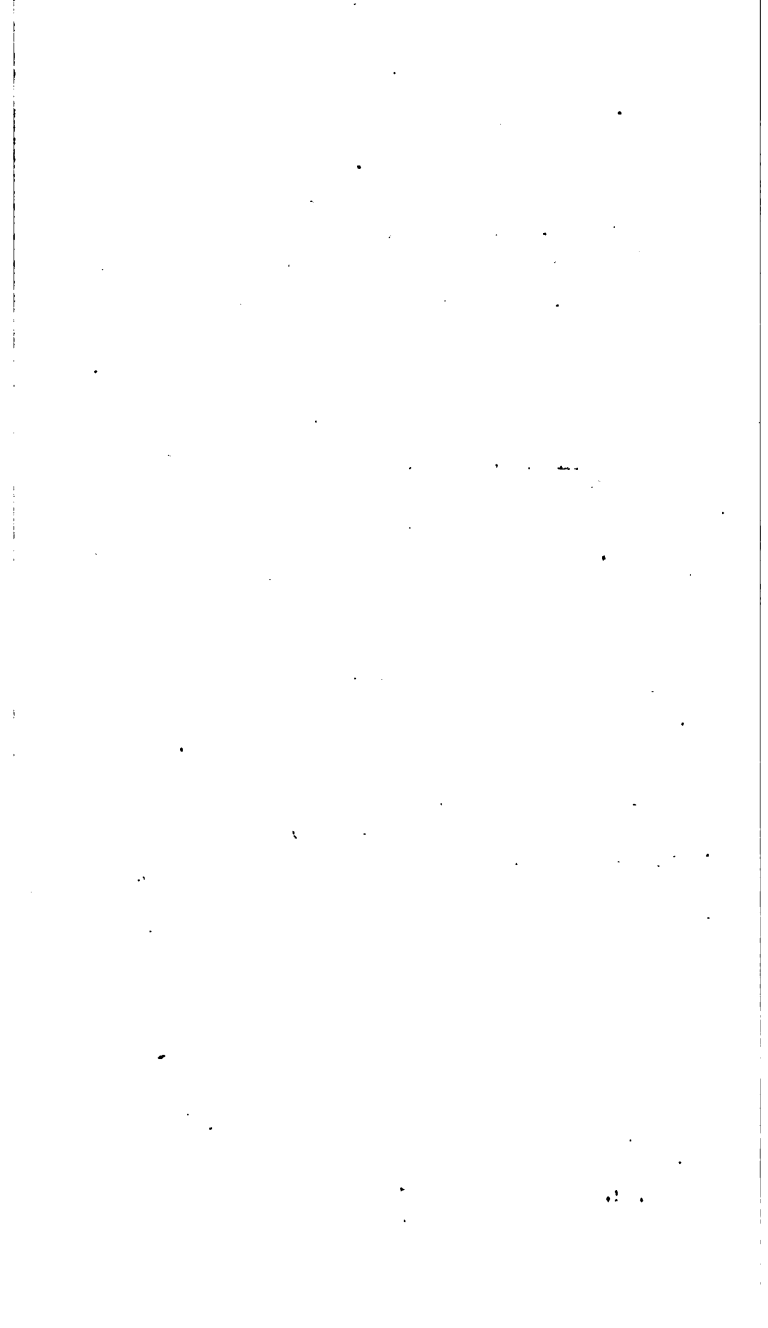
FRANCE.

BOOK III.

SOCIETY.

"There ought to be a system of manners in every nation, which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely."

BURKE.



FRANCE.



BOOK III.



SOCIETY.

Woman.—Her former Influence, and actual Position in French Society.—National Characteristics.—Madame D'Houdetot.—Married Life.—Gallantry, Manners, Education.—Domestic Habits.—The Femme de Chambre.—La Bonne.—Domestic Servitude.—The Toilette.—The Royal Trousseau.

IN all considerations of society, whether political or moral, the mind habitually directs its views to those relations, which spring from the intellectual and physical forces of man alone. But there is a light and ornamental capital, crowning the massive columns of the social edifice, upon which, when the mind has estimated the depth of the foundation, and the strength of the base, it rests with pleasure and recreation. Fragile and delicate, full of grace, and replete with harmony, this last work of the Almighty Architect seems to typify the benevolent intentions, which originated and planned the whole structure of creation.

Woman, in all regions, and under all institutions, as wife, and as mother, exercises, through the delightful medium of these sacred ties, a direct or an indirect influence on the constitution of society. And it is a curious paradox that in the country, where she has reigned with the most unlimited controul, she has been denied all chartered jurisdiction in its political government. There seems, however, to have been at all times a conventional agreement, in French society, to counteract the severe proscription of those Salic laws, which certainly were not established, on the presumption of female inability to reign;* since under the title of REGENT, women have governed the helm with all the despotism of the most absolute monarchy, and occasionally with a tyranny, which has been justly charged against them as a reproach, by the satirists of France and of other countries.

Women have never been called to the throne of elective monarchies, nor have taken any share in republican governments. Their genius, tact, and address suit best with the *finesse*, which rules the cabinets of hereditary and despotic monarchies. The fair Gabrielles and the Entragues had no power in the court of Henry IV. when opposed in his mind to the wisdom of his minister Sully, whose government almost approached to the vigour of republican rule. They had a very different influence upon the affairs of their royal lover, from that exercised in the courts of Louis XIV. and XV. when

* This is the ungallant supposition of Mezeray. Cardinal Mazarin declared that the Salic law was established, because it was always to be dreaded that a queen would be ruled, "*par des amants incapables de gouverner douze poules*!"

the women created marshals, displaced ministers, intrigued with foreign cabinets, and corresponded with imperial sovereignty.*

It was in these two reigns most especially, that love and politics went hand in hand, and the reins of government became entangled with the flowery bands of pleasure.

During the progress of the revolution, woman gradually became circumscribed within her own proper sphere; and when strength succeeded to feebleness, and force to intrigue, the delicacy of female perception, and the refinement of female agency, were no longer in demand. Another and a better scene was opened to woman's activity. Devoted to and for those, who had claims upon her feelings and her exertions, she confined her sovereignty to a more domestic existence. It would

* It is pleasant to consider how much the affairs of Europe must have been influenced, by the intrigues of Mad. de Pompadour. Her resentment against the Duc de Richelieu, for refusing to marry his son to her daughter, had nearly proved fatal to France. "*Ses tracasseries pensèrent, comme on verra, faire échouer l'entreprise sur Minorque, &c.*" Such was her conscious power, that she offered to make Voltaire a cardinal, on condition of his writing a new version of the Psalms. Her correspondence with Marie Thérèse, and the homage offered her by that empress, are too well known to need comment.

It is curious to observe the coolness with which even philosophy, in those days, considered the influence of a royal mistress. Voltaire was among the flatterers of Mad. de Pompadour; and Rousseau, speaking of the Minister de Choiseul, observes: "*Il gaignoit dans mon esprit au peu de cas que je faisois de ses prédécesseurs, sans excepter Mad. de Pompadour, que je regardois comme une façon de premier ministre. Et quand le bruit courut que, d'elle ou de lui, l'un des deux expulseroit l'autre, je crus faire des vœux pour la gloire de la France, en en faisant pour que M. de Choiseul triomphât.*" Mad. de Pompadour has left behind her, in France, the character of an ignorant, shallow-minded, and vindictive woman.

almost appear that this great event occurred for the purpose of demonstrating to what noble extremes of heroism female nature was capable of attaining.* The splendid portraits of self-immolation in the cause of the best feelings and affections of humanity, which many of the illustrious victims of the reign of terror left behind them, have shed a glory upon the sex, whose disinterested virtues and high capabilities they have so signally illustrated.

No longer dazzled and debased by the splendor of a corrupt court, so long the fatal *cynosure* of their sex, the women of France learned to *love their country*, for whose service they now, for the first time, nurtured a future citizen at their maternal bosoms. "*Voilà deux fils que*

* The courageous attachment and indefatigable perseverance, which the women exhibited, during the reign of terror, was most magnanimous. In the first instance, more than two thousand women of condition presented themselves before the Convention, to petition for the proscribed, to whom they had given shelter and protection, at the greatest risk; and in many instances, when they could no longer save or protect, they shared captivity, and even death, with the objects of their pity or their affections. Antigone and the Grecian daughter afford not examples of filial affection, more heroical, than were evinced in the persevering endurance of Mademoiselle Cazotte, the lovely daughter of the charming author of "*Le diable amoureux*;" by Mad. de Paysac, and Mad. de ***, the one sacrificing, the other risking, her life for their illustrious friends, Rabaud St. Etienne, and Condorcet; by the more than heroic, the almost superhuman de Sombreuil, and by the young and incomparable Mademoiselle de la Rochefoucauld, who saved the life of her aged father in the Vendean wars, by a courage and ingenuity which woman alone knows how to unite. To these may be added the Martyr-names of Maillé, de Bussy, de Mouchy, Roland, and last, not least, the heroic Elizabeth of France, who died the victim of sisterly affection. She might have saved herself with her brothers, who fled from France, had she not preferred death, with her unfortunate relations, who remained.—It is curious to remark, that a Mad. La Valette distinguished herself by her resolute determination to die with her husband, during the reign of terror.

J'ai élevés, pour servir leur roi," said an old royalist lady to me, as she read a letter from her son, on his march to quarters. "And I," said the mother of the gallant general—" *J'ai consacré mon unique fils au service de sa patrie.*"

In despotic governments *all undue* influence is exercised and admissible ; and the influence of women being, to a certain extent, *always undue*, her powers are particularly called forth in a state, where the will of the sovereign is the law ; and where by his very position he is thrown, for resource against his own *ennui*, upon female conversation and allurements. It is thus that mistresses purchase the privilege of political interference, by the labour of amusing some royal satrap, "*qui n'est plus amusable ;*" and it was thus that for thirty years de Maintenon occupied the idleness of the king, and influenced the decisions of his cabinet, when *she* had no longer beauty to charm, nor *he* susceptibility to be attracted.

This avenue to female ambition has long been closed, in France. No lady now brings her distaff into the council-chamber, nor can hope to be complimented by some obsequious *contrôleur général* with : "*Eh, quoi, madame, le grand Colbert vous a donc transmis son âme !*"* But although the *executive* power of the sex is

* This speech of Dodun, *contrôleur-général*, during the regency, was made to Mad. de Prie, who had got up a speech on some state question, under the tuition of the crafty Duverney. This woman, who is described by cotemporary writers, as "*femme perdue, intrigante, spirituelle, et libertine,*" governed for some time both France and the regent ; and was herself governed by the four intriguing brothers of the name of Paris. She was the cause that the family of her royal lover did not give a queen to France. Offended by the coldness, with which Mad. de Vermandois received her, she left her in a rage, exclaiming : "*Va ; tu ne seras jamais reine de France :*" and she fulfilled her prediction, by preventing the mar-

confined to the sway of their *domestic regimes*, the philosophy of legislation is by no means denied to their investigation. The reigning politics of the agitated day, during which I resided in France, were discussed even by young women, with considerable force and precision ; while the men listened with indulgence, if not with deference. Feebleness and intrigue seem wholly to have yielded to open and free discussion ; romances are laid aside for "*exposés* ;" the prettiest women in Paris run through all the intricacies of finance, with the accuracy of a chancellor of the exchequer ; and "*lips, which, not by words pleased only*," became eloquent in the discussion of "*le Budget*."

"*Nous voici, ma chère*," said Mad. de R——lze, as I entered one evening her salon. "*Nous voici tous, plu enfoncés dans les horreurs de la politique, que la chambre des communes et tout le parlement d'Angleterre ne pourroient l'être*." And she went on with an argument on *ways and means*, which our arrival had for a moment interrupted. Even politics, however, become amusing,

riage of Louis XV. with one of the most illustrious, amiable, and lovely women of Europe. Mad. la Marquise de Prie gave away, or sold, places of the highest importance. The indolence of the regent, and his devotion to every species of pleasure and of dissipation, left a boundless scope to abuse ; and the same observation might be applied to him, as Cardinal du Bois made of Louis XV. when the deputies from the parliament of Paris came with a remonstrance to Versailles. The cardinal on this occasion dismissed them, saying : "*On ne parle jamais d'affaires au roi*." This Mad. de Prie once threw into the fire the remonstrances of the parliaments of Rennes, and of Thoulouse, observing gaily, that they were of a "*mauvais ton*," and "*sentoient la province !!!*" When she read some songs made against her conduct and character, she observed : "*Voilà ce que sont les François, quand ils sont trop bien*." Such are the *good old times*, which the modern loyalty of England and of France seek to have restored !

when discussed by a well-educated and elegant French woman; and I have heard Englishmen of considerable talent and judgment declare, that the accuracy and precision of many fair politicians with whom they had conversed, even on abstract points of government, went far beyond the level assigned to the mental powers of their sex.

It is this *wide sphere* of discussion, unrestricted by ridicule and unlimited by fashion, which gives the play to their imagination, the force to their intellect, and that charm of facility, elegance, and effect to their language, which habits of general conversation can alone confer. It is thus that they are qualified to become the companions and friends of men, as well as their mistresses and wives. The coarseness of exclusive male society is not sought in France, to avoid the insipidity of female circles. Nor is all wit, brilliancy, and talent left behind, with the empty decanters after dinner, to make room for that "infinite deal of nothings," which with us is presumed to be a necessary qualification for joining the maudlin priestesses of the tea-table.

There is perhaps no country in the world, where the social position of woman is so delectable, as in France. The darling child of society, indulged, not spoiled, presiding over its pleasures, preserving its refinements, taking nothing from its strength, adding much to its brilliancy, permitted the full exercise of all her faculties, retaining the full endowment of all her graces, she pursues the golden round of her honoured existence, limited only in her course by her feebleness and her taste; by her want of power and absence of inclination to "over-

step the modesty of nature," or to infringe upon privileges, exclusively the attribute of the stronger sex.

"To paint the character of woman," says Diderot, "you must use the feather of a butterfly's wing." He must have meant the character of a French woman, who unites to more solid qualities many of the peculiar attributes of that lively insect. Light, brilliant, and volatile, she seems to flutter on the surface of life, with endless adaptations to its forms; but quick, shrewd, and rapid, in her perceptions, she appears to reach by intuition, what intellect vainly toils to obtain by inference and combination. More susceptible than sensible, more awakened through her imagination than excited through her heart, love is to her almost a *jeu d'enfant*. The distrust she inspires in her lover, acts favourably for her interests on the natural inconstancy of man, and she secures the durability of her chain, by the carelessness with which she imposes it.

Sharing largely in the national deference for ties of blood, she is peculiarly adapted to the influence of habitual attachments; and in whatever other countries friendship may raise her altars, it is in France, and by French women, perhaps, that she will find them best served. I saw, during my residence in that country, so many instances of this pure and ennobling principle, that for the first time I comprehended the preference of Rousseau for a people, among whom the Epinays and the Luxembourgs afforded in his own instance so many illustrations of his hypothesis; and where the *friends* he found compensated him for the *mistress* and the *wife*, "*qu'il n'auroit jamais pris en France.*"

It is no uncommon thing in that country, to see the most lasting attachment succeed to the most lively pas-

sion ; and all that was faulty, in unlicensed love, become all that is respectable, in disinterested friendship. There is nothing more common in France, than to behold long-attached friends pairing off from the more prosperous lists of society, to unite their forces against the attacks of adversity, and who suffer with resignation, because they suffer together. These friendships, equally common between individuals of different and of the same sexes, are tacit eulogiums on the marriage state in its best aspect, and indicate the necessity of a sympathy of interests and feelings, with some being willing to blend its existence and identity with our own ; even when passion no longer animates, nor love cements the tie of the communion.

I have at this moment present in my recollection many friends, whom I saw dwelling together in perfect confidence and intimate union ; providing for each other's wants, indulgent to each other's infirmities, giving mutual accommodation to each other's weaknesses, and hand-in-hand stealing down the evening path of life, bereft of all the conflicting passions, which agitated its morning, and retaining enough only of the heart's vital heat, to warm the chill atmosphere of age and debility. Oh ! these are the mild lights which gleam along the broken surface of society ; when the meteor blaze of youth and pleasure are extinguished for ever, by nature or by time.

This determination of the affections towards friendship, so observable among the French of all classes, and most particularly among the women, seems the inherent tendency of the nation, and is by no means a revolutionary virtue. When *le bon homme*, la Fontaine, lost his

inestimable and faithful friend and protectress, Mad. de la Sablière, in whose hotel he lived, Mad. de Hervart immediately presented herself to the afflicted poet ; and abruptly entering his room, she said : "*J'ai appris le malheur qui vous est arrivé ; je viens vous proposer de loger chez moi.*"

"*J'y allois,*" was the simple and affecting reply.*

* However suited the character and manners of the French women may be to friendship, they by no means engross a virtue, which is to a great degree national. While I was at Paris, Voltaire's *walking cane* was sold for five hundred francs, and purchased by the celebrated surgeon du Bois. His joy at obtaining this relic was excessive. A gentleman present observed that he had paid too dear for his purchase. "*Comment,*" he replied with vivacity, "*quand c'est pour l'ami Corvisart ?*" The well-known friendship of these distinguished men, is equally honourable to both parties. Mons. Corvisart is justly celebrated for his work "on the heart," both on the continent and in England.

A young and devoted friend of the brave Caffarelli, saw that celebrated man fall at *St. Jean d'Acre*, while fighting by his side. The death of his gallant friend drove him to despair ; and his grief was so touching, his despondency so profound, that it became a subject of conversation to the whole army. It at last reached the ears of Buonaparte, who paid a personal visit to the mourner. He is said to have shed tears on the occasion, and endeavoured in vain to console him, by observing : "It is at least a solace to you, that your brave friend died covered with glory."

"*La gloire !*" repeated the young man indignantly, and in all the petulance of grief ; "*qu'est-ce que la gloire ? Elle est faite pour un homme tel que vous.*" "Give him some laudanum," said Buonaparte coldly ; and when he had seen it administered, silently left the tent. A few days after this interview, the young man distinguished himself by a desperate intrepidity, which evinced his desire to follow his friend, "*de mourir de la mort Roland.*" His valour became a subject of admiration in common with his friendship, and the army were unwearied in their praises of his spirit and his sensibility. Buonaparte became tired of the subject, and fearful of the example ; and observed in the hearing of several of his young companions : "*Pour ce jeune ****, c'est un brave garçon, mais je l'aurois fusillé, si cela eût continué.*" This anecdote, which was given me as a fact, affords a pendant for the story of the King of Prussia's ordering an officer to be shot, who on the eve of a battle had kept a light in his tent

It must certainly have been in some fit of cynicism, that Montaigne declares the incapability of women for so elevated a sentiment as friendship, to which denunciation he adds, in his own quaint way: "*La suffisance ordinaire des femmes n'est pas, pour répondre à cette conférence et communication, nourrie de cette sainte courtoisie; ni leur âme ne semble assez ferme, pour soutenir l'estreinte d'un noeud si pressé et si durable.*" The devoted friendship of his own favourite, *Royne Marguerite de Navarre*," for the "*preux Roy*," her brother, is a sufficient refutation of his position.

If a lively solicitude for the interest of those recommended to their notice; if acts of kindness may be considered as tests of a predisposition to friendship, I can answer, on my own experience, for the qualifications with which the French are endowed, for feeling and inspiring that sentiment. I universally observed among them an eagerness to oblige, a promptness to serve, a readiness to sympathize with the little everyday crosses of life of their acquaintance, which proceeding perhaps from quick susceptibility for impression, assumes the character of the most genuine and perfect good-nature, that ever warmed or cheered the common intercourse of society. The charge of insincerity, to which the high polish of refined manners, under the old regime, subjected the whole nation, now appears to have so little foundation, that I am well aware I am not

after the prohibited hour, for the purpose of writing to his wife.—Buonaparte's friendship for the gallant General Desaix is said to have been sincere and ardent. When the news of his death was brought to him, at the battle of Marengo, he was profoundly affected, and exclaimed in a tone of great emotion: "*Que ne puis-je pleurer?*" One of his first acts, on his return to Paris, was to raise a statue to his memory.

singular in asserting their professions to fall short of the unsuspecting confidence, with which they come forward to oblige, to serve, and to accommodate even strangers, whom chance has presented to their notice. Associating with them in their circles, in Paris, and occasionally a resident in their *châteaux* in the country, I uniformly found their courteous manners accompanied by kindness and attention, and by all those little nameless acts of friendship, which showed them intent upon contributing to the ease and comfort of their guests.* This may be indeed what Sterne calls the "overflowing of the pancreatic juices ;" but who would stop to explore the cause, while benefitting by the effects.

A French woman, like a child, requires a strong and rapid series of sensations, to make her feel the value of existence. Her prompt susceptibility changes its emotion with its object ; and that cheek, which is now dimpled with smiles, but a few moments hence will perhaps be humid with a tear. When it was objected that some royalist ladies had attended the trial of those unfortunate persons, whose hands and heads were severed, for a conspiracy, more worthy the correction of the "*petites-maisons*," than of so barbarous an infliction, a gentleman undertook their defence before a very mixed company, where I was present, by saying,

"Que voulez-vous ? Les Françaises aiment de pareilles scènes, parce qu'il leur faut toujours des battemens de cœur,

* This kindness and warmth of feeling did not terminate with our residence in France. Having met with a heavy pecuniary loss, during our absence from home, the circumstance reached the ears of our French friends ; and it produced us many letters of enquiry and condolence, backed by the most pressing invitation to return and live amongst them, till our losses were retrieved.

et comment faire battre le cœur, sans une grande sensation ?" "Monsieur," observed an old royalist lady, with indignation, "*une véritable Française n'aura jamais une grande sensation, que pour son Roi.*" "Qu'elle délicatesse de pensée !" was the reply.

The sensibility of the present race of French women, however, is by no means exclusively engrossed by *the king*. Even his holiness, the pope, was said to inspire those *battemens de cœur*, so necessary to their existence.

"You will do me the greatest favour," said a beautiful Mad. D****, "if you will put me in the way of being blessed by the pope." As it was well understood, that Mad. D—— had, as yet, *no call* from "*sister-angels*," the pious request excited much astonishment. The petition was however granted; and as the pope's apartment can "*ne'er by woman's foot be trod*," Mad. D—— crossed him in his garden, and received the wished-for (*bénédiction*.) But this was not sufficient: she intreated permission to kiss his hand. Monsieur *** struggled against the impropriety of this request; but Mad. D—— was urgent, and would not be denied. "*Et la raison de cet empressement ?*" asked Monsieur ***. "*C'est que cela me donnera un battement de cœur ; et que je suis si heureuse quand le cœur me bat*," was her candid answer.

I have known a French lady attend with the most devoted care her sick friend, for weeks together; live at her bed side, "explain the asking eye," anticipate every wish, and forego every pleasure to fulfil the duties of friendship; and yet the death of this person wept for a few hours with bitterness and vehemence, in a few days left no trace of sadness behind it. This happy

(though not heroic) facility of character, is purely constitutional; and while it operates graciously upon all the ills of life; while it quickly absorbs the tear, and dissipates the sigh, it neither interferes with the duties, nor chills the affections of existence. And though it would make no figure in tragedy or romance, it supports resignation, cheers adversity, and enhances those transient pleasures, whose flight is scarcely perceived, ere their place is supplied. This light volatile tone of character, this incapacity for durable impression, this sensibility to good, this transient susceptibility to evil, is after all perhaps the secret, sought by philosophers. The views of the Epicurean, and of the sceptic, well understood, seem to meet at that point, which nature has made the basis of the French character; arriving by different routs to the same conclusion, that *true* sensibility is to feel, but not to be overcome.

A French woman has no hesitation in acknowledging, that the "*besoin de sentir*" is the first want of her existence; that a succession of pursuits is necessary to preserve the current of life from that stagnation which is the death of all vivid and gracious emotions. It appears, indeed, to be the peculiar endowment of the French temperament, to preserve, even to the last ebb of life, that unworn sensibility, that vigour, freshness, and facility of sensation, which are usually confined to the earliest periods of human existence, and which ordinarily lose their gloss and energy with the first and earliest impressions.

I had one day the good fortune to be seated at dinner next to the celebrated Humbolt, who observed, incidentally to the subject of conversation, that there was no-

thing he so much lamented as having arrived a few weeks too late at Paris, to make the acquaintance of Rousseau's Mad. D'Houdetot. "I am told," he continued, "that age held no influence over that charming character, and that she preserved, at eighty, the feelings and fancy of eighteen."*

To these observations Mons. Denon, who was present, added, that the last time he had seen her (and it was not very long before her death,) he could even then trace in her manner, her voice, her look, and her conversation, all that had bewitched Rousseau, and had fixed St. Lambert.

Mad. d'Houdetot is a splendid epitome of the female character in France, even though her intrinsic excellence is shadowed by the manners of the day, in which she lived. To those, whom she may have interested in the eloquent pages of Rousseau, where she appears a being, fanciful and ideal as his own *Julie*, it may not be unpleasing to follow her through her own flower-strown path of real life. Rousseau has sketched, in his happiest manner, her first visit to the hermitage of Montmorenci, after being overturned near the mill of Clairvaux "*Sa mignonne chaussure*" exchanged for a pair of boots, "*perçant l'air d'éclats de rire*," full of health, youth, spirits, grace, and gaiety; attacking with all these charms the sensibility of the philosopher, and awakening, in that hitherto *unawakened* heart, "*l'amour dans toute son énergie, dans toutes ses fureurs.*"

It is curious to oppose to this picture of playful youth and frolic animation, Mad. d'Houdetot, in the

* Mad. d'Houdetot died about the time the allies entered Paris.

same valley of Montmorenci, at a distance of sixty years, seated at her embroidery frame, surrounded by her grand children ; approaching the advanced age of ninety, and yet retaining all the vital warmth of her heart unchilled, all the bloom of her imagination untarnished ; cultivating the kindest affections, and reciting, as if by inspiration, those charming effusions of taste and fancy,* which her modesty would not permit her to transcribe ; and which she composed with the same facility, with which she created the flowers that sprung up from under her needle. It was thus that she was described to me, in those circles, from which she had been but recently withdrawn ; and where every little word and act was still fresh in the memory of friendship.

* It was by stealth, that the grand-daughters of Mad. d'Houdetot took down the poetry which she composed and recited over her embroidery frame. She would never suffer them to be published, and I believe this is the first time that the two following little specimens of her talents have appeared in print.

On the departure of St. Lambert for the Army.

L'amant, que j'adore,
Prêt à me quitter,
D'un instant encore
Voudroit profiter.
Félicité vaine !
Qu'on ne peut saisir,
Trop près de la peine,
Pour être un plaisir.

On the last Duchesses de Vallière.

La nature, prudente et sage,
Force le tems à respecter
Le charme de ce beau visage,
Qu'elle n'aurait pu répéter.

When marriage was, in France, a mere affair of *convenance*, Sophie de la Briche, the daughter of a *fermier-général*, was forced into a union with the Comte d'Houdetot, an officer of rank in the army, described in the traditions of the circles of Paris, as a good sort of gentleman, who lived much at court, and who had the honour to play "*gros jeu*" with Louis XV. By Rousseau he is termed a "*chicaneur très peu aimable*," whom his wife could never have loved. But the sensible, the susceptible Sophie, was destined to love somebody; and she became the rival and successor of Voltaire's Emilie du Châtelet, by fixing the vagrant affections of the gallant, the chivalresque, the poetical St. Lambert.*

The husband and the lover were called at the same moment upon military service; and Sophie, recommended to the solace and care of Rousseau, by his friend St. Lambert, retired to her château in the valley of Montmorenci, in the neighbourhood of the hermitage of the philosopher of nature. "*Elle vint, je la vis ;*" says Rousseau.—"*J'étois ivre d'amour, sans objet. Cette ivresse fascina mes yeux, cet objet se fixa sur elle, je vis ma Julie en Mad. d'Houdetot ; bientôt je ne vis plus que Mad. d'H—— ; mais revêtu de toutes les perfections, dont je venois d'orner l'idole de mon cœur. Pour m'achever, elle me parla de St. Lambert, en amante passionnée. Force contagieuse de l'amour ! en l'écoutant, en me sentant auprès d'elle, j'étois saisi d'un frémissement*

* "*S'il faut pardonner quelque chose aux mœurs du siècle,*" says Rousseau, "*c'est sans doute un attachement, que sa dure épreuve, que ses effets honorent ; et qui ne s'est cimenté, que par une estime réciproque.*"

délicieux, que je n'avois jamais éprouvé auprès de personne."

The defence however made by Rousseau, for a conduct nothing short of treachery, is not admitted by those now living, who have often heard Mad. d'Houdetot and St. Lambert speak of this singular epoch in the life of the philosopher. Rousseau began by soothing the regrets of Mad. d'H——, and by undermining her passion for his friend. He failed in both instances; and then sought to alarm her virtue, by painting an unlicensed love in such colours, as it was rarely represented to French women of that day. If the traditionary anecdotes, from which I have gleaned this recital, may be credited, he so far roused her sleeping conscience, as nearly to induce her to write a last farewell to the absent St. Lambert. But St. Lambert, though almost resigned, was always adored; and when Rousseau artfully pleaded his own passion, and to counteract his former doctrines, confessed that* he was wrong in subduing a sensibility, that made the felicity of the possessor and of all who surrounded her, Mad. d'Houdetot, mistaking his meaning, joyfully exclaimed, "*Ah Dieu! que vous me rendez la vie! Je vais donc faire le bonheur de mon pauvre St. Lambert."*

* It was at this time that he wrote those passionate letters, of which he says: "*On a trouvé brûlantes les lettres de la Julie. Ah Dieu, qu'aurait-on dit de celles-ci?*" When he demanded these letters, Mad. d'H—— said she had burned them. "*Non, non,*" he replied; "*jamais celle qui peut inspirer une pareille passion, n'aura le courage d'en bruler les preuves.*" A few years back, when Mad. d'Houdetot was asked, what she had really done with them, she answered with her usual naïveté, "I gave them all to St. Lambert."

The long absent lover was received with rapture, and the treacherous friend, maddened by jealousy and apprehension, flew to Diderot to expose his griefs, and to demand his assistance. Diderot promised to reconcile all parties, and succeeded in his mediation; and Rousseau, jealous of his influence, swore eternal enmity to the mediator, and breathed it in a citation from the book of Ecclesiasticus, in his celebrated letter to d'Alembert.*

The passion of Mad. d'Houdetot and St. Lambert became almost respectable, by its duration and constancy. But time, which told in favour of the mistress, turned all that was *gold to dross*, in the character of the lover. St. Lambert lost the virtues of youth, with its graces. In the course of a connexion, which lasted forty years, all that had once been fanciful, became capricious; all that was once wit, soured into satire; philosophy became cynicism, and vivacity petulance. Severe, and supercilious, St. Lambert treated the charming "*Doris*," of his "*Seasons*," with a peevish acrimony, which still retained in its harshness the exaction of an all-requiring love. If Mad. d'Houdetot gave play to that brilliant imagination, which accompanied her to her tomb, he was sure to observe; "*voilà qui est bien, cela fait effet.*" And when watching over his fragile health, she insisted upon more temperance than he was willing to endure, he named her "*l'intendante de ses privations.*"

* The friends of Mad. d'H—— express great indignation against Rousseau, for his conduct on this occasion. His accusation of Diderot, that he had betrayed the secret of his passion to his rival, was utterly without foundation. Mad. d'H—— shortly before her death declared, that all what appeared *passion* in J. Jacques was *imagination*; he had no heart!

What perhaps was most singular in this connexion, so strongly marked by the manners of the day, is, that Monsieur d'Houdetot was frequently the advocate of a lover, whose tyranny and caprice repeatedly procured his temporary dismissal from the presence of her, whom his insupportable humour had irritated and disgusted. Monsieur d'Houdetot was at last taken to that abode of felicity, said to be reserved as a recompense for such forbearing husbands, and the death of St. Lambert left this wife and mistress doubly widowed. It was then, that feelings of the tenderest association led her back to Montmorenci. The lovely valley had long changed its inhabitants. The Luxembourgs, the Rousseaus, and the d'Epinays, were no more: "*La bande noire*" had ravaged the palace of the prince, and laid low the hermitage of the philosopher. All was altered by time and circumstances; but the heart, the imagination of Mad. d'Houdetot were still the same. The throb of the one had not slackened in its beat, the warmth of the other had lost nothing of its glow; and at an age, when even memory fails, in others, feeling was still so ardent, and fancy so brilliant, in this extraordinary person, that another St. Lambert was found in the solitudes of Montmorenci, to engross a friendship, innocent and tender as the fondness of childhood; and to which she alludes with a warmth, borrowed from her imagination, in the following lines:

Jeune, j'aimai ; ce tems de mon bel âge,
Ce tems si court, comme un éclair s'enfuit ;
Lorsque arriva la saison d'être sage,
Encore j'aimai—la raison me le dit.

Me voici vielle, et le plaisir s'envole ;
 Mais le bonheur ne me quitte aujourd'hui ;
 Car j'aime encore, et l'amour me console,
 Rien n'auroit pu me consoler de lui.

* * * * *

Madame d'Houdetot was eighty, when she produced these charming lines ; and the object of this new and tender friendship was, like St. Lambert, a resident in her dear valley of Montmorenci. The beautiful villa of Monsieur de S*** almost joined the château of his aged, but attractive mistress. Every morning brought him his billet and his nosegay, elegant and fresh, as the mind of the donor. When Monsieur de S. was asked, how he was affected by inspiring a passion he could not adequately return ? he replied : "her charming conversation, her notes, and her flowers, had become *des douces habitudes* ; and the first day that I missed them was certainly not the happiest of my life."*

This good natured sufferance "*de se laisser aimer*," in a man not half the age of his mistress, is, I believe, the result of a temperament, formed by kindlier suns, and by more genial climes, than preside over the elements of the English character : for the *brutality* of Horace Walpole to the enamoured Mad. du Deffand stands severely opposed to the gentle indulgence of Monsieur de S***. The taint of ridicule hangs, perhaps, on the conduct of both ladies ; but the distance between the

* I had the pleasure of being introduced to Monsieur S***, during my residence at Paris. He is an Italian by birth, and was for some time at the head of the Cisalpine republic. His splendid fortune is devoted to the arts, of which he is a passionate lover, and an elegant judge. The taste and accomplishments of this gentleman merited the esteem and admiration, bestowed upon them by Mad. d'Houdetot.

frigid egotism of Mad. du Deffand, and the generous affections of Mad. d'Houdetot, is immeasurable.

It was the peculiar felicity of the latter to borrow, from the store of perennial feeling and exhaustless imagination, materials, which formed an ideal world around her, and which replaced before her eyes the actual scenes of life. There was a vein of genuine, unaffected romance,* governing the course of her protracted existence, which experience *did not*, and time *could not* subdue.*

It is a singular circumstance that this rival of the beautiful Mad. du Châtelet, this immortalized "*Doris*" of St. Lambert, this sole object of all that Rousseau ever knew of passion, at once his theme and his inspiration, had not one feature, one tint or trait of personal attraction, which love could exaggerate into beauty, or imagination endow with a charm. The secret of her influence over the hearts of all, whom she sought to interest, was the ardour, the sensibility of her character, the tender, passionate cast of her manners, and the playfulness

* The picture drawn of Mad. d'Houdetot's person, by Rousseau, is said to be done by a lover's hand ; but it is by no means very attractive. The *tout-ensemble*, however, including her manner and air, is quite charming. "*Mad. de H—— approchoit de la trentaine, et n'étoit point belle. Son visage étoit marqué de la petite vérole, son teint manquoit de finesse, elle avoit la vue basse, et les yeux ronds ; mais elle avoit de grands cheveux noirs, naturellement bouclés, qui lui tomboient au jarret. Sa taille étoit mignonne, et elle mettoit dans tous ses mouvements de la gaucherie et de la grace, tout-à-la fois. Elle avoit de l'esprit très naturel et très agréable ; la gaieté, l'étourderie, et la naïveté s'y marioient heureusement. Elle abondoit en saillies charmantes, qu'elle ne cherchoit point, et qui partoient quelque fois, malgré elle. Elle avoit plusieurs talens agréables, jouoit du clavecin, dansoit bien, faisoit d'assez jolis vers. Pour son caractère, il étoit angélique, la douceur d'âme en faisoit le fond ; mais hors la prudence et la force, il ressembloit toutes les vertus.*"

and redundancy of her all-creative imagination. Retaining to the last hours of life, the freshness of the first, she inspired the feelings she preserved. Age grew young, as it listened to her, and youth forgot that she was old, when she spoke. Take her with her frailty and her merit, her faults and her virtues, France only could have produced such a woman; in France only such a woman could have been appreciated. Mad. d'Houdetot, in the possession of all her faculties, and almost of all her graces, died at the age of eighty-eight, surrounded by her friends, and by her grand-children, the offspring of her only child, the present general, the Baron d'Houdetot.

I have to lament, in common with Monsieur Humbolt, that I arrived too late in Paris to have seen this interesting and extraordinary woman. But occasionally associating with those, who once had the happiness to live with her, I delightedly tracked the print of her steps, in those elegant circles, over which she had once presided. May I here be permitted to acknowledge the polite attentions I received, while in Paris, from the amiable sister of Mad. d'Houdetot, Mad. de Briche, at whose Sunday evening assemblies I have so often found united, whatever Paris contained of rank, talent, beauty, and fashion. These evenings recalled to my imagination, the little court, which surrounded her sister-in-law, Mad. d'Epinay, where statesmen and ministers mingled with the Diderots, Rousseaus, the Grims, and the Holbachs,* in the salons of La Chevette.

* * * * *

* I had the pleasure of knowing the amiable niece of Baron Holbach, Madam R——. In talking over the pretended conspiracy of the Hol-

I was speaking one day to a royalist lady on the many charming qualities of a mutual friend of ours, and on the excellent character of her husband. She replied with a shrug, "*quant à lui, le bon homme, c'est une excellente personne ; cependant, ma chère, il ne remplit pas l'âme de sa charmante femme.*" This want of *having her soul occupied* by a husband, to whom she had been twenty-five years married, I thought rather an *exaction*, on the part of the "*charmante femme*," and I could not help observing, that, notwithstanding this singular refinement upon married happiness, I considered Monsieur et Madame de **** an exemplary couple. My royalist friend agreed with me ; adding, that it must be confessed "*l'amour conjugal*" was much more prevalent since the revolution than before ; and that "*maintenant, il-y-a d'excellens ménages dans la France.*"

This is indeed an avowal universally made by the French of all parties ; and more consideration is attached to this tie, when respectably maintained, and faithfully observed, than to any other domestic relation of society whatever.

It is now supreme *mauvais ton* to resort to the old worn-out jests levelled at men, who attend to their *own* wives, in preference to those of *others* ; and indeed, I observed, in all public societies. and in the many and various entertainments given at court, on the marriage

each *coterie*, about which Rousseau so extravagantly raved, this lady assured me that the first cause of his quarrel with her uncle, was a present of four dozen of singularly fine Champagne, which the baron sent to the philosopher ; an *insult* that Rousseau never forgave. The little *pour-parlers*, to which this gave rise, terminated in a rupture, out of which Rousseau's vivid but hypochondriacal imagination conjured all his long train of "*chimeras d'être.*"

of the *Duc de Berri*, that the women, and particularly the *young women*, were always accompanied by their husbands. It would be difficult to ascertain the precise *minimum* of sentiment, which goes to make up the sum of married happiness in France, and to draw a scale of comparison between the stock of conjugal affection, which exists in that country, and in England. England, however, has some *good old habits* in her favour, invariably connected with the laws and government of a free nation, and which, perhaps, already begin to survive their source and origin, while some *taint* of the *original sin* of despotism is still, in France, to be found operating even on private society. The play given to natural feelings for twenty-five years back, may not even yet have quite righted those errors, that arose out of institutes and habits, which the abuses of many centuries contributed to form, to perpetuate, and to excuse.

Married life has always been most respectable and most sacred, under free governments; while under the influence of political despotism, women, treated either as *slaves* or as *sultanas*, are never *wives*. It is thus that they once reigned in France, by an *undue* influence, subversive of all their natural virtues. It is thus that they still serve in the East, with that corrupt depravation both of morals and intellect, which inevitably re-acts upon their tyrants—and vindicates insulted nature.

As it is *not* the fashion, in France, to believe that the sole duty and object "*of heaven's last, best gift*," is to

"*Suckle fools*, and chronicle small beer,"

women are there frequently the *friends* of their husbands, even when ties, more passionate and tender than

those of friendship cease to exist. A Frenchman seeking a rational companion in the wife, who perhaps never was his mistress, frequently finds in her society that frankness, pleasantry, information, and even **GOOD FELLOWSHIP** (if I may use the expression), which possesses a charm too often neglected in married life. How true Frenchwomen, however, *can be*, in feeling and in sympathy, to their husbands, has been painfully evinced during the horrors of the revolution, the struggles of twenty-five years' emigration, and, above all, during the political vicissitudes and conflicts in France, which have occurred since the return of the Bourbons.*

The distracted and devoted wives, who were seen almost *weekly* in the gallery of the royal chapel of the Thuilleries, by sympathizing multitudes, pleading at the feet of the king, for the lives of their brave, but condemned husbands, afforded such pictures of conjugal devotion, and exquisite sensibility, as few countries could rival, and *none* surpass.

The young and unfortunate Mad. La Bedoyere, dying of a broken heart for him, whom her tears and supplications could not save;—the struggles, the exertions, the almost manly efforts, made by Mad. Ney, are cited even

* Some of these heart-rending scenes took place during my residence in France, and even while I was present in the *chapel royal*; but I had not the courage to witness them. Mad. d'Angoulême is said to have pulled her gown out of the convulsive grasp of one of these *wretched suppliants*, with such force, as to leave a piece of the royal drapery behind her. It is to this *strength* of feeling in her royal highness, which none of her "*sex's weakness*" has yet subdued, that the *ultras* allude, when they exclaim: "*Madame a beaucoup de caractère. Elle joue un grand rôle !*"

by their enemies, as incomparable.* The ready self-immolation of Madame La Valette, who knew not, and feared not, the results of the task she had undertaken; and the sacrifices of Mad. Bertrande, who so willingly gave up a world, where she still reigned supreme in the

* Madame la Valette has the character of being one of the most virtuous and excellent women in France. It was on the failure of her affecting applications to the king, for the life of her husband, that the following song was made at Paris.

Complainte de la Valette.

La Valette est condamné,
Tout le peuple est consterné,
Et tout bas chacun répète :
La Valette. (*bis*)
Pauvre la Valette.

Le Roy, pour se régaler,
Voulait le faire étrangler,
Et chaque Bourbon répète :
La Valette. (*bis*)
Péris la Valette.

Sa femme, pour le sauver,
A leurs pieds court se jeter,
Ils repoussent sa requête,
La Valette. (*bis*)
Pauvre La Valette.

Le Roi lui dit, en courroux,
Madame, retirez-vous,
Faut, que justice soit faite.
La Valette. (*bis*)
Péris La Valette.

Elle va dans la prison,
Lui prêter son cotillon,
Son vitz-schoual, sa cornette,
La Valette. (*bis*)
Sauve La Valette.

Pour

unproscribable influence of fashion and beauty, to follow her brave husband into a voluntary and dreary exile; these are splendid instances of conjugal virtue among a host of other examples, less distinguished by the rank of the parties, but not less deserving of publicity and praise. It is the fashion, however, for modern travellers, and the writers of modern travels, to declaim against the fidelity of French wives, to boast of their own *bonnes-fortunes*, and to

“ Talk of beauties, which they never saw,
And fancy raptures, that they never knew.”

But limited in their experience by the difficulty, which *all strangers*, and particularly *British strangers*, find of obtaining admittance into the interior of private society and domestic life, in France, they have drawn their pictures of the *actual* state of French society, and their character of its women, from such originals as were presented to their observations in the courts of the *Palais Royal*, or in the bad novels of the days of *Louis XV.*

With the exception of a few men of very high rank, and of those connected with the English government, and holding ministerial or official situations, I never met

Pour leur remettre l'esprit,
Le bon La Valette prit
De la poudre d'escampette,
La Valette. (*bis*)
Sauve La Valette.

La d'Angoulême en rougit,
Le Comte d'Artois frémit,
Le roi n'a pas sa braie nette.
La Valette. (*bis*)
Vive La Valette,

*in any circle or society whatever, in Paris, a single subject of the British dominions.**

* * * * *

The progress of general illumination must always forward the interests of morality. Knowledge, once confined in France to a certain class,† and considered as an *état*, is now universally diffused, and felt to operate upon all the ties of social life. Husbands no longer boast the philosophy of the Richelieus‡ and des Beaugées; while wives are so coquettish, as occasionally

“D’aimer jusqu’à leurs Maris.”

Some French women expressed to me no little indignation at its being supposed, that French husbands did not exert a decided authority in their own families; as Russian brides exhibit the cane, with which they endow their husbands on the wedding-day, for the purpose of domestic correction.

* It is needless to make exceptions, in favour of such men as Playfair or Davy, who belong to all countries and ages, and who, in *scientific* France, were naturally received with that deference and respect due to their genius and the benefits they have conferred on their species. The genuine simplicity of professor Playfair’s manners was a subject of general admiration, and remarked by all who had the happiness of being known to him, at Paris.

† Anne Duc de Montmorenci, high constable of France, defending himself against the imputation of having given his authority to a libel against the Prince de Condé, declared that his secretary must have deceived him, by changing one paper for another—“*ce qui étoit d’autant plus aisé,*” said this distinguished nobleman: “*que je ne sais, ni lire, ni écrire!!!*”

‡ The pleasantries and witticisms of the famous Duc de Richelieu, on the gallantries of his dutchess, are to be found in every encyclopædia of wit. The grammatical precision of the celebrated academician, Monsieur de Beaugée, at the moment he made a discovery fatal to his honour and conjugal happiness, is too well known to need citation.

"*Les Anglais se trompent fort,*" said the charming Madame de C** C***s to me one day, "*s'ils croient que les Français ne savent pas aussi se faire obéir. Il-y-en a beaucoup, qui entendent cela à merveille ; mais je pense que c'est moins à la mode en France, qu'en Angleterre. D'ailleurs, ma chère, je suis forcée de convenir qu'il manque à nos maris une chose forte essentielle au bonheur. C'est de pouvoir nous mettre une corde au cou, et nous conduire au marché, quand il sont de mauvaise humeur !*"

To this custom of selling wives with halters round their necks, among the lower classes in England, the French make constant allusions. There is nothing places our own national prejudices in so strong a light, as thus coming in contact with the national prejudices of others. In England, all French husbands are considered as "*des messieurs commodes.*" In France, all English husbands are frequently distinguished by the epithet "*des bruts.*"

"Voilà," said a French lady, with whom I was driving in the Champs Elysées, "*voilà, Miladi * * * * et son brutal,*" pointing to an English couple not celebrated for their conjugal felicity. Of the frequency of divorces in England ; their publicity, which reflects the mother's shame on her innocent offspring ; the indecent exposure of the trials, where every respect for manners is brutally violated, and the *pecuniary* remuneration, accepted by the injured husband, the French speak with horror and contempt ; particularly as women, whose character is no longer equivocal, are received in the English circles of Paris, by persons of the highest rank.

"Your divorces," said a French lady to me, "*seem not to proceed, in general, from any very fine or delicate*

sense of honour ; but to be as much a matter *de convenance* between the parties, as marriages formerly were among us." Legal divorces are rare in France : formal and eternal separations made privately by the parties, are more general ; and when love survives, in one object, the honour and fidelity of the other, measures of greater violence are sometimes adopted, more consonant to the impetuous character of a people, whose passions are rather *quick*, than *deep-seated*, and who frequently act upon impulse, in a manner which even a momentary reflection would disclaim.

During my residence in Paris, a young man of condition destroyed himself, on having obtained proofs of his wife's frailty. A few weeks afterwards, a gentleman shot himself through the head, in the church-yard de Vaugirard, not because his wife was *faithless*, but (as he declared, in a written paper found in his pocket,) because she was *insensible* to his own passion.

A more interesting case of conjugal suicide was related to me, while I was travelling through Normandy. A Mons. C——, whose beautiful seat I saw near Rouen, had destroyed himself, a few months before on the tomb of his deceased wife. She had inspired this romantic husband with the most ardent passion ; and died in the prime of her beauty, and of her youth, of a rapid decline. Monsieur C—— struggled in vain against the despondency her loss occasioned. The unequal conflict between reason and feeling finally decided him on the desperate step, he had long meditated. He devoted some weeks to the arrangement of his affairs (for he was a rich manufacturer of cloth ;) and having settled his large property on his infant children, whom

he committed to the guardianship of his brothers, he put a period to his existence, assigning no reason for this act of desperation, but his total inability to enjoy life, after having lost her, who had so long made it precious to him.

On the subject, however, of conjugal virtue in France, I have an authority, which it may not be here inappropriate to cite, as being of a less sombre nature. Whoever has visited the memorable and beautiful village of Chantilly, may, perhaps, have noticed the handsome Mad. de Pinte Amelot, and her gallant husband, the *aubergistes* of the *hôtel de Bourbon Condé*. Mad. Pinte, with her large blue eyes, and "*coëffure à la Chinoise*," and Monsieur, with his loose military *rédingote*, and his black silk cap, worn on one side, "*d'un air gaillard*," are characters to put even the sulky *Smellfungus* into a good humour : and to create a new page of sentimental observation, in the journal of *Tristram*.

I was one morning standing at the door of "*l'hôtel de Bourbon Condé*," conversing with the intelligent M. Pinte Amelot (who spent his day in parading before his inn, and in talking to the passengers,) when the appearance of the charming Mad. Pinte, at one of the windows, gave rise, on my part to some complimentary observations on her beauty.

"*Ah, Madame*," observed her husband, "*elle est aussi bonne que belle ; d'ailleurs c'est un garçon infiniment spirituel, que ma femme.*"

I now complimented him, upon his conjugal admiration, adding that, "I had always heard there was very little "*amour conjugal*," in France; but that he had undeceived me."

"*Comment donc, sacré !*" he replied in a passion. "No conjugal love in France? *En tous tems, Madame*, we have been famous for our conjugal virtues: I could cite you a thousand examples myself: *moi, qui vous parle.*"

I asked him for *one, par exemple*: "*Tenez, Madame,*" said Mons. Pinte, counting on his fingers, "*voilà notre Héloïse et Abelard; et puis, notre Pyrame et Thisbé; voilà, que voulez-vous, Madame ?*"

Thus backed by M. Pinte Amelot, and "*Pyrame and Thisbé,*" it is, perhaps, unnecessary to cite another instance, in favour of the prevalence of conjugal love, *de tout tems, en France.*

While married life, in France, has evidently gained by the change, which has been effected in the manners and habits of the country, *gallantry*, in the modern acceptation of the term, is, in its influence and extent, much the same as in England. The result of idleness and vanity, it is inevitably more prevalent in those elevated circles, where rank and opulence exclude occupation, and leave the imagination and the passions open to any engagement that comes as a resource, affords an obstacle, or awakens an emotion.

As long as the frailties of a French woman of fashion are "*peccata celata*;" as long as she lives upon good terms with her husband, and does the honours of his house, she has the same latitude, and the same reception in society, as is obtained by women similarly situated in England, where, like the Spartan boy, she is punished, not for her *crime*, but for its *discovery*. There, a divorce only marks the line between *reputation*, and its *loss*: society will not take hints, and a woman must pub-

licely advertise her fault, before she can obtain credit for having committed it.

The high circles of Paris are to the full as indulgent, as those of London. *Lovers understood*, are not *paramours convicted*; and as long as a woman does not make an *esclandre*; as long as she is decent and circumspect, and "assumes the virtue which she has not," she holds her place in society, and continues to be, not indeed *respected*, but *received*. Gallantry, however, in France, is no longer that cold system of heartless egotism and profligacy, which avowedly took as its governing maxim, that

"L'objet quitté, n'a été que *prévenu* ;"

which coldly calculated the *probable duration** of a passion; and which, systematic in its ardour, as in its cruelty, soon changed an idol into a victim, and followed up the jargon of affected devotion with the language of opprobrium and disgust.†

But while few of those "*Cupidons déchainés*," who made gallantry the business, end, and object of their lives, are now to be found let loose upon society in

* When one of the *complaisantes* of Louis XV. proposed to him a lady of rank, as successor to Mad. De Pompadour, after a moments consideration, he replied, "Non, elle couleroit trop à renvoyer."

† The frail and fair Countess de Guebriant sent a billet to the Duc de Richelieu, to let him know she awaited him, by appointment, near the "*cour des cuisines*," in the *palais-royal*. He replied, "*Restez-y, et charmez les marmitons, pour lesquels vous êtes faite. Adieu, mon ange!!!*" Cruelty and contempt were the usual *pour-suivans*, of love and devotion, in that school of French gallantry, which began towards the middle of the reign of Louis XIV. and was a very different sentiment from that elevated and romantic gallantry, which declined, together with the spirit of the French nobility, after the wild but gallant conflicts of the *Fronde*.

France, a sort of "*galanterie banale*" still prevails, which seems inseparable from the French temperament. Men still offer, as a duty, that assistance, homage, and respect, which the women seem to take, as a right. And if, in these *anti-chivalric* times, there yet remains a spot where man seems a *Preux* by nature, and woman may be a "*queen for life*," it is unquestionably France. Even age, *there*, does not inevitably dismiss one sex from the lists of admiration, nor release the other from the obligations of attention and respect. "*Avoir un charme, jusqu'à dans les rides*," is not confined to those forms, which time has spared, and over whose waning charms love still sheds the reflection of his departed light. Even *mind*, there, partakes of the attraction of *sex*; and the brilliant fancy and inextinguishable sensibility of Madame D'Houdetot, at seventy, awakened an admiration as genuine and as lively, as the personal charms of Ninon de l'Enclos obtained, at three-score.

I know not whether it may be deemed fatal, or serviceable to morality, that the spirit of slander meets no encouragement in French society, and that a tendency to defamation is considered an irrefragable proof of ill-breeding, and vulgar origin. This seeming leniency to the faults of others, does not wholly spring from an indulgence, indiscriminate in its views of *good* and *evil*. It arises, to a certain degree, from a fulness of mind, a copiousness and fluency of conversation, that is never driven by its own barrenness to the discussion of subjects, merely and invariably of a personal and private nature. Few are so idle, so ignorant, or so shallow, as to be indebted to the frailties of their neighbours, or

their friends, for their sole topic of conversation and remark.

There is also, indeed, on this point a circumspection, which leaves the *mere* stranger in Parisian society liable to imposition, for few like to "*throw the first stone*," and "*Je ne la connais pas*," is the usual reply to any enquiries made on the subject of such females, who, though not of the family "*de la pruderie*," still hold their precarious place in society, by a decency and propriety of conduct, which lay suspicion at rest.

The innumerable sets, circles, and parties, into which the immense mass of Parisian society is broken up, does not admit of that universal exposure of character and conduct, which, in a smaller sphere of action, or where society is more blended, and forms one great whole, places every member of the community before the mirror of general observation. None but characters of eminence and celebrity can be brought before the tribunal of public opinion in Paris, and receive the indelible marks of infamy or high consideration. To whatever extent domestic virtue and conjugal fidelity may be carried, in France, by the dissemination of useful knowledge, and the progress of moral philosophy, it is extremely difficult to come at any direct proofs of their violation. For besides that refinement and reserve, which decline the slanderous communications of the idle and the malignant, the long-established laws of decency, with that conventional idea of *bien-séance*, so implicitly obeyed, govern imperiously the forms of French society. It may be that, in strict observance of its dictates, more virtue is *affected*, than is *practised*; yet no vain boast is ever made of a vice which, though fashion may sanc-

tion, morality condemns; and those, who err, "*by stealth,*" have the good taste to "*blush, to find it fame.*"

It is indeed curious to observe the severe prudence, united to the childish volatility of this paradoxical people, whose character and government seem so long to have been at variance, as to have mutually re-acted upon each other, and reconciled extremes almost irreconcilable, the one always leading by its dispassionate and amiable elements towards *that* virtue, which the other endeavoured to obliterate by slavery and corruption. And though the long-inculcated habits of a base morality on a particular point, must still have left much of its taint behind it, and though the severer and well-developed principles, which free countries possess, may not have taken a universal root in France, yet how favourable to the cultivation of moral qualities the mild and genial temperament of the French nation has ever been, is best evinced in that extensive propriety, which even the most vicious respect, and the most degraded do not violate.

In the lowest places of public amusement, in the most mixed and motley assemblies, all is decency and seeming propriety. No look shocks the eye, no word offends the ear of modesty and innocence. Vice is never rendered dangerous by example, nor are its allurements familiarized to the mind of youth, by the publicity of its exhibitions. This propriety of exterior, this moral decency in manners, has been made a subject of accusation against the French by recent travellers, who demonstrate their patriotism, by extolling even the licentiousness, which, in England, openly presenting itself to public observance, marks by very obvious limits the line between

vice and virtue. But England, the first country in the world, because still the *freest*, will disdain this parasitical eulogium on all that is faulty in her social institutions, and a country which, at this moment, is struggling equally against the insidious influence of *private* and *public corruption*, will surely not rank those among her friends, who would intoxicate her with an incense of indiscriminate praise, and confounding her virtues and her faults, lull her into that vain-glorious security which has ever been in all states the sure fore-runner of slavery and degradation.

It is owing to the extreme *propriety* and even *purity* of manners, preserved in all public places, in France, that young females of every rank and condition, well brought up, may remain ignorant, as far as their own observation goes, that there *does* exist a wretched portion of their sex, who eat the bread of shame, and live by self-degradation. But no woman of any rank or age, who has only *once* visited a *public place*, in England, can escape becoming the involuntary witness of the most unblushing vice, of the most brutal indecency.

This Clinical mode of study in morals, formally recommended to the innocent and the inexperienced ; this purposely leading the sane and the vigorous to the bedside of disease and of death ; this guarding and preserving health, by exposing it to the observation and infection of malady ; is a singular paradox in moral doctrine. But surely, when in the accidents of public society chance places vice within the sphere of virtue, if the former borrows the veil of decency in respectful deference to the latter, and shame, blushing and awe-struck, still survives the loss of its companion innocence, the

cause of moral good is still supported, honoured, and preserved.

While this decency of exterior extends itself to all the forms of public association, it is carried to an excess in private society, which sometimes banishes ease, and induces formality. There exists no such mode of gratifying *vanity*, without risking *feeling*, as is practised with us, under the generic name of *flirting*. One of those honest, unmeaning, "*flirtations*," carried on in the corner of every drawing-room, where an English assembly is held, or pursued on the staircase, or doorway, to the great annoyance of all persons, not particularly interested in the alliance, would shock an elegant society in Paris, beyond all power of endurance. In affairs of the heart, French women know no medium between love and indifference. They may have *male friends*, but they have no *flirts*; and if they have a lover, they would be as cautious of distinguishing the fortunate being in public society, by any marked preference, as an Englishman of fashion would be of making love to his own wife, before company. Speaking on this subject to a very clever and very witty French woman, Mad. d'E****, she observed respecting the decency, even of the women most notedly gallant, "*Les Françaises sont les seules femmes peut-être, à qui il soit permis d'avoir des torts; car elles seules s'attachent à leurs devoirs et à la décence, quand même elles ont une vertu de moins!*"

The public attentions paid by Englishmen, of the most distinguished rank, to women of public and notorious characters in Paris, and their introduction of such persons into the private circles of society, excited universal indignation and contempt. It was in vain to talk to the French of English morality, while English

women were seen to associate with, and even to pay respectful homage to some modern *Lais* of the day, whose fashion rather than her talent had become her passport into society.

No public women whatever are admitted into good French company. Once "*sur les planches*," once upon the boards, whether as actress or as singer, they can never be received by women of character and condition, except in their professional capacity, when they are engaged and paid, "*pour donner une scène*," on some particular evening, to sing their *bravura* on the night of a private concert. The *prima Donna* of the opera is there never the *prima Donna* of private society. The well-known anecdote of some English dutchesses holding the shawl of the late presiding deity of the opera house, in London, till she was at leisure to put it on, excited infinite mirth in an assembly of French ladies; where it was related, in my presence.

The imitative talents have indeed no false appreciation in France; they rank not *before*, but *after* original genius. While, in our circles, a fashionable actor, or first-rate singer, would be received with a more marked distinction, than an Otway, or a Cimarosa; in France, the author and the composer would hold a place in public estimation, and in private company, which the actor and the singer could never hope to obtain. Oh! it is depressing to the feelings of high-minded and sensitive genius thus to receive, in homely obscurity, its scanty remuneration, and neglected by its cotemporaries, to live only for that future day, which will come too late, to awaken the gracious emotion arising from *conscious merit*, crowned by success; while the imitative talents, which owe their being to its labours, and derive their

materials from its imagination, are courted, feasted, and paid with an unsparing prodigality. Some of the best poets, in England, are at this moment struggling with a "bare sufficiency" far from those circles, which their talents were calculated to irradiate and delight; while Italian singers have recently returned to their own country, to purchase principalities, and English actors are driven to extravagant excesses, by the superabundance of suddenly-gotten wealth, which they know not how worthily to employ, or prudently to accumulate. In this instance they certainly "manage these matters better in France."

* * * * *

"*Le style a un sexe,*" says Marivaux, *et on reconnoît une femme à une phrase.*" This observation is perfectly applicable to his own countrywomen. There is in *their* language, style, and phraseology, something extremely *sexual*, a *finesse*, a delicacy, a tact, a sort of instinctive appropriation of every word to its subject, which the fine perception and flexibility of woman's peculiar structure can perhaps alone originate. The verbal criticisms of a French woman on literary productions, even her personal observations, are delivered with a pointed and well turned elegance, which makes every sentence an epigram. And on subjects of mere sentiment, on the development of a feeling, or the analysis of a passion, they speak with a precision and a facility, which, if sometimes deficient in originality, are always directed by taste, and expressed with terseness.

Perhaps this talent, or acquirement (and I believe it is partly both), is sometimes carried to an extent that savours of study, and approaches to affectation; even though "*sentir le bel esprit,*" is an imputation which the

most confirmed *précieuse* is now anxious to avoid. Much however must be allowed to the difference of *national manner*; and the manner of the *most natural* French woman *must* carry with it, to English judgment in its first impression, the taint of affectation. Until experience correct the error, her motions, her gestures, her air, all seem characterised by motive, and rather calculated, than involuntary. The sudden lighting-up of her countenance, when addressed, gives her, according to our phlegmatic standard of inexpressive quietude, the semblance "of calling-up," like *Lady Pentweezle*, "a look, for the occasion." All this, however, is mere natural mobility, aided by habit and confirmed by fashion. And though it is impossible not to see, that there still remain in society many of these "*façonnées*," whose motions go "*par ressort*," who, like Moliere's *Climéne*, make "*la mouë, pour montrer une petit bouche, et roulent les yeux, pour les faire paroître grands*," yet, generally speaking, all palpable affectation is, in good society, deemed full as vulgar and as ridiculous, as it is in England; while whatever strikes as original or *naïve*, in the manner of the women of other countries, obtains the tribute of unqualified and liberal approbation.

Female education appeared to me much less systematic, and less professional, than with us; attended with infinitely less labour, and less pursued for purposes of exhibition. Music seems an acquirement, adopted only by natural taste and superior talent. It makes no *indispensable branch* of education; and its theory is even sometimes studied, where its practice is neglected. While pretension is thus universally discountenanced, the unsuspecting visitor, who enters the salon, in search of the higher enjoyments of social intercourse, is never *taken in*, by a

series of *early preludes*, and "*useful grounds*," performed by *amateur débutantes*; nor is a feigned admiration volunteered or extorted, with all the corollary observations on new systems, or the merit and qualifications of the various fashionable and rival professors of the day. I did not indeed hear much *amateur* music in Paris; but what I did hear, was exquisite and finished. One of the finest performers on the piano-forte, in Europe, is a young French lady of fashion, now resident in Paris, the charm of every circle, the soul of every society, in which she appears; and yet I believe there are few, who would forego her conversation for her music; or who would not find her wit and pleasantry "*still sweeter than her song*."*

Among the arts most pursued in the range of female education, *painting* seems the most prevalent. It is cultivated by women of the first rank with great success.† The liberal and splendid exhibitions of the best efforts of the greatest masters, both of the modern and ancient schools, which, until within the last two years, were open to the French public, afforded unparalleled oppor-

* Mademoiselle d'Alpay, the young and devoted friend and companion of the princess de Craon; known to some of the first persons in England, by the exertion of her talent and virtues, during a painful emigration.

† It is impossible to touch on the subject of female accomplishments, in France, without noticing the three charming daughters of the late celebrated M. Esmenard. These very young ladies speak French, English, and Spanish, with equal elegance and fluency, and are first-rate musicians. Mad. Luis Esmenard, notwithstanding her extreme youth, has already obtained some celebrity for her exquisite talents in miniature-painting, and ranks high among the distinguished pupils of her master, Isabey. By the recent changes in the government, the members of this most accomplished family have suffered much in their circumstances, and the daughter of an ex-minister now seeks resources of subsistence in a talent acquired from taste, for the purposes of amusement.

tunities for the cultivation of taste and the formation of judgment; and native talent was called forth and assisted by the multiplicity of models and the facility of pursuit, which every where presented themselves.

Still, however, in France, as every where, the arts are most indebted to those, who *live by professing them*. The best music is to be had, for money: the best pictures are those, which may be bought: and the universal passion of the nation for intellectual and literary pursuit, directs the views of female education more particularly to the cultivation of mind, than to the imitative talents. Reading and conversation are their resource and their habit; and if they furnish society with fewer pretending and inferior artists, they enrich it with a proportionate number of well-informed and elegant gentlewomen.

It was observed by the patriarch of *Ferney*, in one of his cynical fits, that "*les Parisiennes parlent bien leur langue, parce qu'ils n'en savent point de autres.*" If he had said, "*parlent point d'autres,*" the observation would be better applied to the French of the present day. The French organ seems to lend itself with great difficulty to the formation of sounds, not strictly vernacular. I scarcely knew a woman in Paris, who did not read English, who had not read all our classical authors; yet I knew but three, who could speak it to be understood; and two of those ladies had been in England.

To understand, how totally different the *rhythmus* of a language is from its appearance to the eye, it is necessary to hear it spoken by a foreigner, who never heard it pronounced by others. The efforts occasionally made by some of my fair Parisian friends, to address

me in English, resemble very much the attempts at enunciation of the pupils of the Abbé Sicard, in his seminary for the dumb and deaf. The words seemed *bolted out*, after a little convulsive struggle in the throat, as Harlequin is made to articulate, in the Italian comedy, by a violent thump given him on the back. A very pleasant person, after an ineffectual contest with some guttural sounds of *th* and *ph*, exclaimed: "*Ah ! ma chère, c'est inutile ; ce vilain Anglais me reste toujours au gosier.*"*

I never, however, found myself inclined to smile at their difficulties and their mistakes, that their own polite and kind indulgence to the ludicrous errors, which they hear every day made in their own polished language, did not give me some very compunctious "visitings of conscience." The pains, indeed, they take to *translate a foreigner to himself*; to clear up the confusion of his ideas, in the entanglement between two languages, are equally indefatigable and amiable; and they have a peculiar expertness at this sort of verbal construing, which places their habitual good nature in strong relief. I remember a friend of mine explaining to the celebrated Mad. de V**te, the influence which the voice of the law in England held over the people; which, he observed, was sure to enforce obedience even to its most inferior officers. To illustrate this position, he chose a riotous assemblage of the lower orders, suddenly dispersed by the *constable* of the parish. "*Oui, madame,*" he repeated, "*dispersé par le constétable.*"

The good sense of Mad. de V—— seemed rather to revolt at the *connétable's* interfering upon such occasions;

* I have often been much amused, by hearing French ladies discuss the merits of the style of Robertson, Hume, Gibbon, and Johnson.

and she began to sound the mistake by, "*Comment donc, monsieur, vous avez aussi un grand connétable? Vous avez donc aussi vos Annes de Montmorenci?*" My English friend, provoked at her dulness, endeavoured to explain to her that nothing could be less like the great Anne de Montmorenci, than the worthy compeers of Monsieur Townsend and Co. "*Enfin, Madame,*" he added, "*un high constable, c'est un alguazil.*" "*Ah, seigneur dieu! monsieur,*" replied Mad. de V—, "*qu'est-ce que vous venez donc à me dire? Vous avez des Alguazils!—vous autres fiers républicains!*" My English friend was now completely posed, until Mad. de V— undertook to translate for him, and with the customary "*tenez, vous allez voir,*" found a parallel for the *grands constables* of England, in some of the subaltern departments of the French police.

It is a very singular circumstance, that the return of the French emigrants from England after a twenty-five years' residence in that country, has absolutely added nothing to the stock of acquirements, in the English language or literature. Of the numbers whom I met in society, who had resided in England, I could never get one to speak to me in English, with the exception of the Prince Louis de la Trimouille, and the prince de Beauveau. The usual reply was, upon all occasions, "*J'entends l'Anglais, mais je ne le parle pas.*"

I was at court the night that Mrs. Gallitin, the American Ambassadors, was presented to the Duchesse d'Angoulême, who addressed her in French. Being informed that Mrs. G. did not speak French, her royal highness expressed her regret to Mr. Gallitin, that she could not address his lady in English, as *she could not*

speaking that language. Madame de Angoulême was received under the protection of England, while yet almost a child, and lived there twenty years. The emigrant nobility, indeed, seem to have stopt short with English literature, as with every thing else, at the reign of Louis XIV. They still talk with delight of the “*Seasons of Monsieur Tonson,*” and enquire with unabated friendship after “*Monsieur Yong, et les charmantes nuits.*” A hundred times I have been offered a pinch of snuff, and a short criticism together, on English poesy; beginning with, “*Ah, madame, vous avez des poètes charmants, charmants ! Votre Tonson, par exemple ; et vos romans, madame, Votre “Betsy Tutless,” mais c’est un bijou, que votre Betsy Tutless ! pour ne rien dire de la divine Clarisse.*”*

Italian and German are more spoken in France than English, though not more read ; and all the continental languages indeed enter more into the system of education in France, since the revolution, than they ever did at any period before that event. The reason is obvious : France for a time held the same place in Europe, which Rome had once held in the then known world, and persons of all nations were found filling the public places, and congregations in the private circles of its capital.

It may be said of a French woman, what the king of Prussia said of himself : “*Lorsque je suis bien comprimé j’ai une ressource admirable.*” For the full develop-

* I tried, in vain, on my return to England, to procure “*Betsy Thoughtless,*” the first *genuine* novel, I believe written in the English language, that I might myself judge of the merits of a work, so highly estimated by some of my French friends.

ment of the character and faculties, a French woman must be placed under the influence of circumstances of great emergency. She makes a much better *heroine* than a *housewife*, and is more adequate to encounter dangers and difficulties, which call for exertion, and bring great recompense, than to meet the bustling duties of every-day-life, which require only small sacrifices, but demand perpetual efforts. There is a sort of real or affected helplessness about French women, of the higher classes, which renders them very dependant upon their domestics; and a *femme-de-chambre*, or *maître-d'hôtel*, has the same superintendence in a French family, as in England would devolve on its mistress, except she was of the very highest class, and at the head of an establishment, quite unknown in France. No woman of the lowest description meddles with the mysteries of dress-making: their needle-work is all ornamental; and I have overheard coarse, vulgar persons in shops and public places talk of their *couturières*, their *marchandes de modes*, and their *femmes-de-chambre*, who had themselves by no means so respectable an appearance, as a second-rate housemaid in the family of an English gentleman.

The ability and shrewdness of a French woman, of condition, seem indeed confined to the penetration of character, the development of passions, and to subjects of taste and abstraction. She rarely applies the full force of her powers to the coarser business of life. She is unequal to those economical calculations, by which English thrift balances means, and regulates expenses. In the distribution of pecuniary matters, the *femme comme il faut*, the woman of fashion, is, generally

speaking, an amiable, but thoughtless child. She gratifies her feelings and her propensities with careless promptitude, gives her money to the relief of misery, or to the demands of her milliner, with unreflecting readiness; and lays out her income in dress and charity, trinkets and amusements, with prodigal simplicity. I never heard a French woman say any thing was *dear*; and when I have often thought to astonish them, by the exorbitant charges of a tradesman, who I supposed had made me pay "*en dame Anglaise*," they have always re-assured me with "*mais, ce n'est pas cher*."

Among the middle classes, however, and most particularly among that large class of well-born persons, whom a long train of political vicissitudes have practised in all the extremes of wealth and of indigence, I am told the most rigid economy is united to that decency of appearance, which almost amounts to elegance. By this *savoir faire* of the female heads of families, many are comfortably supported in Paris, and are enabled to enjoy the society of a select circle, on an income, which would scarcely maintain an individual, in a country town in England.

Economy, thus thoroughly understood, is still further promoted by the consolidation of families: for the breaking up and dividing the common resources, by a multiplication of separate establishments, is an event of very considerable rarity. This blessed union of family interests and of family affections, which unites so many generations under one roof, and blends the views of the aged and the young, is one of the happiest aspects, in which the character and habits of the nation present themselves. The churlish separation of interests, which

with us so soon loosens the ties of parental and filial tenderness, which makes the aspiring son pant for that majority, which gives him an independent establishment, and renders the zealous father the suspicious tenant of his impatient heir, is wholly unknown in France. Their domestic life is purely patriarchal; every family consists of three or four generations, all gathered under the same roof, all assembling at the same hearth, and ranging round the same table. That cheeriness of spirit, that even flow of temper, which "opens in each *heart a little heaven*," preserves an harmony and order in the social government of every *ménage*, which the morbid humours and bilious affections, engendered by less genial climes and temperaments, so frequently disturb.

Among the many charming family pictures, which so often gratified my heart and imagination, by the exhibition of united affections, may I be permitted to select one, which, for its brilliancy and beauty, might claim that preference, which my gratitude for attentions received from all its members unreflectingly gives. I mean the family of the Prince de Beauveau.* Interest-

* The family de Beauveau is one of the most ancient houses of Lorraine, and they are princes of the empire. The uncle of the present prince was the celebrated minister of Louis XV.; his maternal uncle, the no less celebrated Chevalier de Boufflers, the author of the letters from Switzerland, and the *enfant chéri* of Voltaire. The Princesse de Beauveau, one of the most amiable women in France, is daughter to the Duke de Mortemart. Their eldest son, Prince Charles, is united to the sister of the Duke de Choiseul Praslin, and co-heiress to the wealth of that rich and illustrious family. Their second son, Prince Edmond de Beauveau, who, with his brother, attained at a very early age to high military distinction, is at once a fair, and a splendid image of the youth of France, gallant, spirited, and impetuous, inheriting "*l'esprit de Mortemart*," as his maternal birth-right, with some of the romantic traits

ing by its historical relations, but doubly interesting by its present position, and by combining, in its group of four generations, all that is venerable in age, respectable in maturity, lovely in youth, and charming in infancy.

It is a most gracious sight to behold these little patriarchal circles always united, always together, enjoying the delicious freshness of the summer evenings, in all the public gardens of Paris. The grand-children, and sometimes the great grand-children, attended by their "*bonnes*," lead the van, with their light, bounding steps, and playful gambols; "*les chers parens*," as they are usually called, follow, and *le bon papa et la bonne mamma* bring up the rear, with well-sustained gravity. Chairs are hired, or seats are taken immediately, for the elders; while the younger party are permitted, under the vigilant eye of *la bonne*, to skip their ropes, or dance their "*rondes*;" to form hollow squares, or to mount guard (for all the boys are military,) while "*les petites marchandes*," or *petites bouquetières* with well-taught insinuation of manner, offer to "*mes aimables demoiselles*," or "*beaux jeunes messieurs*," their *confitures* and nosegays, for a remuneration, left to the generosity of the young purchasers; with the usual observation of *mademoiselle à la figure trop aimable, pour que je ne me ferois pas à sa générosité*.

The *femme-de-chambre* is at this moment the same familiar, shrewd, important, and ostensible person, in a

and arch humour, which distinguished the youth of the author of the "*Reine de Golconde*." The young ladies, Natalie and Gabrielle de Beauveau, are, according to the standard of English taste, the loveliest persons in Paris.

French family, as she appears in the *Toinettes* and *Derinés*, the inimitable *souvantes* of Molière. Sometimes the director-general of the establishment, she is always the cabinet-minister of her lady; who generally brings her into the family, on the wedding-day, and she is not unfrequently the only female servant in the house.

As it is less the fashion with French ladies to "*courir les boutiques*," than it is with English ladies "*to shop*," almost all purchases are made by the *femme-de-chambre*, except matters of mere taste or fancy. And I have generally heard it observed, by women of my acquaintance, that the attachment and fidelity of these persons rendered them perfectly worthy of the trust reposed in them.

The *souvante* of the young married lady, frequently becomes in time *la bonne* of the matron; and to her care the children are entrusted; even the first rudiments of their education are committed. *La bonne* is a charming character, peculiar to France; something between the Grecian nurse and the Spanish duenna; with all the affectionate devotion of the one, and all the official dignity of the other. Respected by the servants, beloved by the children, and treated with consideration by her employers, *la bonne* generally remains in the family, after her young charge is consigned to the care of superior instructors.* Voltaire is said to have submitted to the jurisdiction of his *bonne*, at the moment that

* The establishment of a French family of rank and fortune generally consists of a *femme-de-chambre* and *femme-de-charge*, a *maître d'hôtel*, and *valet-de-chambre*; two laquais or footmen, one of whom is the *frotteur*, (*the fond de la maison*) performing all the offices of a house-maid with us. To these are added the *chef-de-cuisine*, and *garçon d'office*.

he exercised an absolute authority over the opinions of more than one-half of literary Europe.

In one of the many delightful conversations I had with Madame la Marquise de Vilette, on the subject of Voltaire, her adopted father, she related to me some pleasant anecdotes of the influence which *Barbara*, or, as he called her, *Baba*, his ancient *bonne*, held over him. Barbara was an old Savoyard, peevish, irritable, and presuming; but devoted to her illustrious charge, and watching with maternal solicitude over those infirmities of his age, which her own was exempt from. "One day," said Mad. de Vilette, "during my residence at Ferney, while I was making my toilette, I was startled by the violent ringing of Voltaire's bell. I flew to his apartment, while Barbara (who always sat in his anti-chamber) hobbled after me. "*Je sonne mon agonie !*" vociferated Voltaire, as we entered together. "*Je me meure,*"—he then explained to us, that he had drank a cup of rose water by mistake, and was almost poisoned. "*Comment donc !*" exclaimed the provoked Barbara, released from her fears, and restored to her ill-temper.

"*Comment donc ! Il faut être le bête des bêtes, pour faire une telle sottise.*"

"*Bête, ou non,*" replied Voltaire, with the subdued tone of a chided school-boy ; "*il n'est guerre plaisant d'être empoisonné même par l'esprit de rose !*"

Moliere had also his *bonne*, and *Baba*, and *la Foret*, belong as much to posterity, as the illustrious geniuses, whom they had the honour to serve, in the responsible character of "*la bonne !*"

The state of domestic servitude in France, has, from the earliest times, evinced the inherently amiable and mild disposition of the people ; a disposition which alone ameliorated and rendered durable the severity of the feudal system. The term *domestique* rarely carried with it any sense of degradation. In the days of Charlemagne, many of the great officers of the crown bore the same epithet as the domestic servants of the court. The ancient nobility placed their children in a sort of domestic servitude in the families of noblemen, more opulent and more powerful than themselves. Bayard, the "*chevalier sans tache et sans peur*," was conducted, while yet a boy, by his father, to the castle of his rich and powerful uncle the bishop of Grenoble, to enrol him among the youth of the prelate's establishment ; when, after mass, "*On se mit à table, où derechef chacun fit très bonne chère, et y servoit le bon chevalier, tant sagement et honnêtement, que tout le monde en disoit du bien.*" The young Bayard soon learnt the graces of his office, with all the address of the young Cyrus ; and when the Duke of Savoy came to dinner at the bishop's, "Bayard," says Theodore Godfroy, "*le servoit très mignonnement.*"

It is not very long since the Duc de Bouillons* paid to the Noailles a pension, "*parce qu'elle étoit la récompense des services domestiques rendus par un Noailles à la maison de Turenne ;*" and Louis XIV. talks of sending a "*grand seigneur, qui est mon domestique,*" on an embassy to the Pope.

* A curious incident took place some years back at Paris. Mons. G——e, a private gentleman, dressed his servants in the same livery as the Duke de Villerois. The duke took exception to it. Mons. G——e told him, that the livery was his own, and that the Villerois had formerly worn it.

Modern servitude in France, less dignified and respectable than in more primitive times, is still softened by many indulgences, and rendered more tolerable, by the mutual good-will which usually exists between the master and the domestic. The health and comfort of the servants in France are much more attended to than in any part of Great Britain. They are not confined, the greater portion of the day, under ground, in *unwholesome vaults*, dignified by the name of kitchen and offices. The French *office* is on the ground-floor; or, frequently, every *étage* has its little kitchen, where the *chef-de-cuisine* and the *garçon d'office* only inhabit; all the rest of the domestics occupy the *anti-room*, which is too near the apartment of the superior of the family, to admit of boisterous mirth, or coarse impropriety.

This chamber, generally spacious, looks into the courtyard, and is simply furnished with necessary accommodations: its *stove* is the *foyer* of domestic sociality in winter, and in summer the open windows are equally attractive. Here the *femme-de-chambre*, always seated at her work-table, glances her shrewd look, from under the eye, at the guest who passes on to the apartment of her lady: here the *maître d'hôtel* looks over his accounts; and the *valet-de-chambre* reads his novel, or his play, ready to perform his office of *groom of the chamber*; while the more bustling *frotteur*, who in the evening assists as *laquais*, or footman, is engaged in all the active service of the house during the day. Here too are received all the servants who may arrive with the carriages of the guests; for the lady and her footman walk up together; and each have an equally comfortable apartment to receive them. A poor gentleman in boots, or a

prince covered with all the *insignia* of rank and royalty, seem to excite the same sensation in the anti-room. The servants all keep their seats, and no one attempts to rise at the entrance of the most distinguished guest, but the *maître d'hôtel* or *valet*, who is to throw open *les grands battans*, with a theatrical air, and announce, with a most stentorial voice, the rank and name of the stranger.

There is no contrast more shocking and violent, in English society, than that presented by the situation of master and servants during the hours of social intercourse of fashionable London. For the one, the air is perfumed with roses, and the chill atmosphere of winter, expelled by every artificial contrivance; and comfort, enjoyment, and accommodation are studiously accumulated. For the other, all is hardship, suffering, and endurance. Exposed for hours to all the inclemency of the season, in listless idleness, or in vicious excess (the necessary and inevitable alleviation of their degraded situation), this large and useless class of persons gratify the ostentation of their masters, at the expense of health, and of every better feeling and higher consideration.

In France, the health, comfort, and morals of the servants gain by an arrangement, which good taste, and good feeling, seem alike to have instituted. When the guests of the evening assembly arrive at the *portecochère*, the porter assigns a place, either in a vacant *remise*, or in the court-yard, for the carriage and horses, which, generally sheltered from the weather, and shut up under the care of the porter, leave no further anxiety on the minds of the masters or servants, who usually ascend together the vast open staircase. While the former

pass on to the salon, the latter join the circle of second-hand high life, in the anti-room, which, well lighted and well-warmed, generally presents a card-table, where some round game is playing. Or, perhaps, little groups assemble, while some one reads aloud the journals of the day, or some novel, tale, or *vaudeville*; for every body reads in Paris, and the servants are neither last nor least among the studious.*

I believe, indeed, it is peculiar to France, that there exists in it a branch of literature, which, if not very extensive, is solely appropriated to the use and benefit of servants. "*Le vrai régime du gouvernement des Bergers et des Bergères*," by *Le bon Berger*, is a very ancient production, applicable to the rustic ménage. "*Le parfait cocher*," supposed to have been written by the Duke de Nevers; "*L'Auteur laquais*;" "*La vie de Jasmin, le bon laquais*;" "*La maison réglée*;" "*Les Devoirs généreux des domestiques de l'un et l'autre sexe envers Dieu, et leur maîtres et maîtresses, par un domestique*;" and "*Le moyen de former un bon domestique*;" are all works of great utility, written with appropriate simplicity; and making but a small part of the domestic library.

I was one day walking on the *quai Voltaire*, followed by our *laquais de place*, when he suddenly stepped up to me,

* Passing through the anti-room, at Mad. De Briche's, one Sunday evening, I was accidentally detained there for a few minutes; during which time I counted thirty servants engaged in playing round games. Among the showy French liveries, I perceived the liveries of the Hardwick family, of the British ambassador's, and those of some other distinguished British families. The English footmen seemed to assimilate very readily with French modes, and doubtless thought this a pleasanter mode of passing their time, than waiting in the streets, or even struggling to get admittance under a temporary shed in London.

and, pointing to a bookseller's shop, "*Au grand Voltaire,*" he observed ; "*Voilà, Madame, une maison consacrée au génie !*" There died Voltaire—in that apartment with the shutters closed. "There," he added, emphatically, "died the *first* of our great men ; perhaps also the *last*."

Upon all occasions, indeed, this intelligent attendant exhibited a knowledge of French literature, which, from a discovery he once incidentally made, appeared to me the more surprising.

I was one morning writing a note to the Baron De non, and being a little doubtful of the purity of my French, I was reading aloud my billet to my husband, for the benefit of his grammatical experience : when our valet, Charles, who was arranging some flowers in the room, paused in his work to listen to me. Before I had got half through my note, he interrupted me with, "*Mille pardons, mais—Madame—*" and he hesitated. "This is not French, then," I observed : "is it not so, Charles ?" "*Mais, oui, Madame, c'est Française si vous voulez ; mais ce n'est par PUR, et puis, pour le style C'EST FROID.*"

"As for instance, Charles ?"

"*Eh bien, madame, par exemple,* you begin by saying, *you regret* that you cannot have the pleasure, &c. &c. and you should say, *je suis au désespoir.*"

I proposed to Charles to write the letter himself, and that I would copy it.

"You may write it, at my dictation, if you please, *miladi,*" said Charles, "but for reading and writing," he added, "*voilà une branché de mon éducation, qu'on a tout a fait négligée.*"

The note, as dictated by Charles, was sent to Mons. Denon, and I believe holds a place among the other curiosities of his collection.

The circumstance of this *illiterate literatus* quoting, and occasionally alluding, to works of celebrity,* notwithstanding his having *neglected* the more vulgar attainment of *reading and writing*, induced me to make some inquiry as to his mode of study. Charles informed me that it was usual for the lower classes, in his *quartier*, to assemble at each other's doors in the summer's evenings, for the purpose of listening to some "*lecture*." All who could read, took the book in turn; and those who could not, listened, marked, learned, and inwardly digested.

The number, however, who cannot in turn contribute to the instruction of their friends, is very small. Nothing is more usual than to see the hackney-coachmen reading on their stands, and even the "*commissionnaires*," and the *porteurs d'eau*, drawing a duodecimo from their pockets, and perusing it with the most profound attention, in the intervals of their labour. It is impossible to visit "*les Halles*," the Parnassus of the comic Vadée, without being struck with the market, opened equally for poetry and potatoes, for philosophy and fish, for herbs and history. There the cries of "*Haricots verts*," and "*voyez, voyez, monsieur, des maquereaux frais*," are mingled with "*voilà les fables de la Fontaine, voilà le Télémaque de Fenelon! voilà les contes de Mons. de Voltaire!*" Food for the mind and for

* Speaking of *La Belle Limonadière* of the *Palais-Royal*, Charles applied to her a line from Molière: "*Elle ouvre une grande bouche, pour ne rien dire*," adding "*car elle est aussi bête que belle*."

the body is here bought with equal facility; and both are adapted to the means of the humble purchasers; for it is certain that these hawkers would not carry their classical ware to the haunts of the lowly and the vulgar, if they did not find a ready market even among fishwives and *marchandes des herbes*.

The benevolent Mons. Chamousset, the Howard of France, projected a society for servants so early as in 1754, under the name of "*L'établissement pour les domestiques malades, et l'asyle pour les servantes hors de condition.*"* Other similar establishments have arisen since the revolution, to improve their condition, and to provide against the inevitable evils of age and infirmity.

There is no class, in France, whose manners so strongly retain the marks of the short-lived day of "liberty and equality," as the domestic servants. There is indeed a certain line of deference and respect which they never pass; but within that boundary, they are communicative, easy, and almost familiar; and with their masters, as with their friends, they consult, advise, forewarn, condole and rejoice, with undisguised sympathy and interest. I have frequently noticed, in the first houses, a servant tap his master on the shoulder, to direct his attention to some guest who stood in need of it. It would be there quite unnecessary to make exception for a *licensed risibility*, in favour of "*old Grouse, in the gun-room,*" as Diggory does with M. Hardcastle. A

* "*On conte,*" says the Abbé Gregoire in his excellent work, "*De la domesticité,*" &c. "*actuellement dans la capitale quatre vingts corporations de ce genre, qui embrassent au moins six mille familles, ce qui les porte à l'économie, aux bonnes œuvres, à l'assistance réciproque.*"

French laquais feels the merit of a good story, to the full as much as his master ; and is almost as audible, in testifying his approbation. I have sometimes seen the servants almost convulsed with laughter, at the pleasantries and humourous stories that circulated among the guests, upon whom they were attending.

The familiarity and influence of the servants at a certain period of society, in France, their acuteness, dexterity, and *finesse*, furnished the old dramatic poets and novel writers with their leading characters and plots. And though the general diffusion of knowledge, occupation of time, and improvement of morals, must naturally lessen the influence of low cunning, and dispense with the agency of unprincipled ability, still great quickness of perception, and shrewdness of observation, may be traced in the successors of the *Scapins*, the *Mas-carils*, and *Scagnarelles*, of the older times.

Shortly before I left Paris, a friend of mine told me that his *valet-de-chambre*, one morning while dressing his hair, perceiving that he was reading La Bruyère, observed, "*Cet homme là avait grande connoissance du cœur humain ; mais il lui manqua une chose, c'est d'avoir été valet-de-chambre.*"

* * * * *

In the curious epistolary correspondence, carried on for some time between Louis XV. and his friend, the Marechal Duc de Richelieu, the king (always speaking of himself in the third person) communicates the following important decision—" *Sa majesté a décidé l'affaire des parasols ; et la décision a été ; que les dames et les duchesses pouvoient en avoir à la procession ; en conséquence elles en ont.*"

In a country, where the despotic chief of the government thus interested himself in the complexion of his subjects, and made the affair of the parasols an act of legislation, the toilette could not fail to be an object of national attention, nor escape the interference of royal ordinances and legislative protection.

Louis the XIV. the solemn Pope of all frivolities, presided with an infallibility of judgment never disputed, over the wardrobes of his mistresses. He seldom failed to attend the *toilette* of Madame de Maintenon, even when the graces had ceased to be the handmaid; and it was in the dressing-room of the *Dauphine*, where Mad. de Maintenon officiated as *Dame d'Atours*, that the king irrecoverably lost his heart, subdued by the dexterity and grace with which she arranged the tresses of the royal head. "*Il est inconcevable*," says that artful person, speaking of this circumstance, "*comme l'art de bien peigner les cheveux, ait contribué à mon élévation*."

The *toilette*, like the Aristotelean philosophy, reigned absolute over public opinion in France.—From its dogmas and doctrines there was no appeal; and Buffon's maxim of "you may know a man by the sort of coat he wears," was received into general application. All, therefore, who were not "*mis noblement et avec magnificence*," decided at once their own inferiority of qualification and condition.

Crebillon (himself a man of fashion) makes much of the merits and success of his heroes depend upon their being "*vêtus supérieurement, avec goût et avec noblesse*." In like manner, his heroine becomes interesting, according to the shades of her rouge, and irresistible from the air of "*une coëffure négligée*."*

* See *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*.

When the virtuous Roland, the republican minister of Louis XVI. first appeared at the court of Versailles, the peculiar homeliness of his toilette excited a universal sensation. In the minds of those, who held their own existence from the observance of certain etiquettes, and who believed the safety of the government would be endangered by their violation; the round hat, and the black shoe-strings of the new minister, awakened the most perfect consciousness of his inability to fill the office he had obtained. Monsieur de B**, the master of the ceremonies, the very "*glass of fashion and mould of form*," expressed his anxiety on the subject to General Dumourier, who was present, with "*voyez donc, mon ami, pas même des boucles dans ses souliers.*"

"Ah, Monsieur!" exclaimed Dumourier, with well-affected gravity, shrugging his shoulders, "*tout est perdu.*"

Robespierre, during the most sanguinary period of his reign, was distinguished by the delicate and affected *recherche* of his dress; and a muslin waistcoat, lined with silk, *couleur de rose*, and a coat of "*bleu le plus tendre*," was the favourite costume of this monster; who, inaccessible to every feeling of humanity, still submitted to the influence of fashion.

While modes have recently changed in France, with governments and institutions; while the *tunic of Aspasia* has succeeded to *sacks* and *hoops*, and has been *superseded* in its turn* by ruffs and farthingales; while the

* I have occasionally assisted at the *toilette* of some of my French friends, and been much amused by the questions of their *femme-de-chambres*, or their female *coiffeurs*, as to the important arrangements of the day "*Quelle coëffure madame a-t-elle choisie? Veut-elle être coëffée à la Ninon? au à la Grec? Madame est charmante à la Seignè. Et sur*

chignon à la Sevigné, or *coëffure de Ninon*, now triumph over *la tête à l'Agrippina*, or the flowing tresses of the *Venus Anadyomène*; still, under all changes and vicissitudes, the toilette has preserved its empire and its influence unshaken and undiminished.

The "cloud-capt towers and gorgeous palaces" have melted and dissolved away; the royalists have become rebels, courtiers turned republicans, and coquettes become Roman matrons:—still the temple of fashion has kept its station of eminence unshaken; and it still finds its vestibule crowded with votaries, and its altars smoking with frankincense and myrrh.

Napoleon, who scanned with a searching eye all that was *strong* or *feeble* in the French character, turning it to the purposes of his own ambition; made his *due offering* to the personal vanity of the French, by consulting with boundless profusion, and unequalled splendour, their taste for dress. The *costume* of his coronation and his court, the draperies of the state and of the corporate and legislative bodies, were all marked by a richness and magnificence, unknown even in the most ostentatious days of France. Each order had its livery; and the dress and the sentiment were frequently dicta-

perbe à l'Agrippina." The humour of the fair person occasionally decides her character and dress for the day, and sends her forth a *fierce republican*, with a Roman head; or a *royaliste outrée*, "*frisée naturellement, à la Pompadour!*" "I am very ill to-day," said the excellent and amiable Empress Josephine (who, however, *par parenthèse*, was an empress and a French woman); "give me a cap qui sent la petite santé." A cap of delicate health was presented to her. "*Mais, c'est trop malade! Vous croyez donc, que je vais mourir?*" A head-dress of more healthy appearance was produced by the attendant. "*Encore donc,*" exclaimed the empress with a languid yawn, "*vous me trouvez si robuste.*" I had this anecdote from a person of rank, who was at this levee, who admired her virtues and laughed at her caprices.

ted by the same power ; and were adopted with equal readiness and promptitude, at his command.

Buonaparte, however, who protected the toilette with one hand, and the altar with the other, as equally efficient agents in his views, was a mere *Tartuffe* himself in faith and finery ; and secretly indifferent to the external forms of both. His robe of a *hundred skins*, and his golden toilette, which now obtains the admiration of foreign royalty, and gratifies the curiosity of Europe by its exhibition ; these "*outward seemings*" were all designed for the *vulgar multitude*. His *plain blue coat and little hat*, strictly copied from the *costume* of his idol King of Prussia, were *for himself*.*

* This two-fold character of *emperor and man* was extremely obvious to those who knew him well. He was quite a different personage to the few who had "*les petites entrées*," and the many who had only "*les grandes*." One who always enjoyed the privilege of the former, and who long lived with him in habits of intimacy, told me that going into his apartment one afternoon, when he was *tête-à-tête* with the young empress, he found him in high spirits, and that having looked into the adjoining anti-room to see that *all was clear*, he turned to Monsieur * * *, and said, "*Dancez-vous encore ?*" "*Mais oui, toujours*," was the reply : "*allons donc*," said the Emperor, "*dansons !*" "*Il dansa*," said Mons. * * *, "*tout à travers, mais de tout son cœur*." This extraordinary man exacting the most profound respect, in public, admitted, in private, the most boundless familiarity, and thus frequently led those who were intimate with him to risk themselves beyond the boundary of propriety.

General Rapp was devotedly attached to the Emperor, but extremely careless in his address and conversation with him. This veteran was standing one morning in the anti-room of Napoleon's *private* apartment, when he perceived one of the gentlemen in waiting conducting a man of very equivocal character into the imperial cabinet. This person remained a considerable time closeted with the Emperor. Rapp grew impatient, and anxious for the safety of Napoleon, repeatedly thrust his rough head in at the door to see whether all was right ; and as suddenly withdrew it. The suspicious stranger at last took his leave, and Rapp obtained his audience. "*Que diable*," exclaimed Buonaparte, as Rapp

The toilette, under all governments thus supported in France, "*De par le Roi*," by "the united and indivisible republic," and by the "*ordonnance impériale*," reigns in the present moment with all its ancient supremacy. Intimately connected, as it now appears to be with legitimacy, in Europe, blending its interest, in England, with those of church and state, and occupying the leisure hours of the majesty of Spain,* it assumes in France the same form, influence and importance, as when her kings presided over tortoise-shell combs, determined, in council, on the re-instatement and restitution of a banished parasol.

That "*Esprit de système*;" that submission to rules and regulations to which the French seem to submit, from the necessity of giving ballast to their sail, by an artificial weight foreign to their own specific lightness, is observed equally in the genius of their toilette, as in their poetry and their dramas. The regulated observances of both are never violated: both are equally deficient in imagination, and both are cultivated in despite of natural impediments. France has never been the land of poetry nor of beauty, and yet poetry is the passion, and dress the object of the nation.

It is on this point that French women are most fallible, and lose all that is most interesting in their characters, or respectable in their conduct. Here economy

entered, "*que diable voulez-vous donc, en mettant votre tête à la porte comme cela ?*" "*C'est que je tremblai pour vous*," replied Rapp, "for perhaps you do not know, that the person with whom you have been closeted is a traitor, a rogue, a swindler, en un mot, c'est un Corse, voilà !"

* The king of Spain embroiders with great elegance. Hitherto his works have been confined to the toilette of the Virgin Mary, whom he has lately presented with some drapery, embroidered by his own royal hands.

ends, and extravagance begins to know no bounds. Here all that is frivolous supersedes all that is essential; and all that is light floats to the surface. The merits of the *divine cachemir*; and the "*joli mouchoir de poche brodé*," rapidly succeed to financial discussions, and political arguments; and, "*combien de cachemires avez-vous, ma chère?*" is a question, asked with more importance, and considered with more gravity, than would be given to the new political tracts of M. M. Chateaubriand and Fiévée, by the many fair disciples of those grand vizirs of *ultra-stateswomen*.

The elegant produce of the Indian loom is an indispensable object to every French woman, and from the estimation it is held in, one would suppose there was "magic in the web of it." I shall never forget the mingled emotions of pity and amazement I excited, in one of my French friends, by assuring her, I never had been *mistress of a cachemir*.

"*Ah! seigneur Dieu, mais c'est inconcevable, ma belle,*" and she added that I ought to buy one, with the produce of my next work. I replied: "I had rather buy a little estate with it."

"*Eh, bien, ma chère,*" she answered quickly, "*un cachemir, c'est une terre, n'est-ce pas?*"

In fact, these valuable and expensive shawls generally do become *heir-loom*s, in a French family.

"*Voilà un trait de toilette pour vous, mon enfant,*" said Mad. de Genlis to me one morning, as I entered her pretty apartment, at her Carmelite convent, to which she has retired. "Here is a trait will amuse you;" and she related to me the following anecdote.

A little before I had paid my visit, a young gentleman had left this celebrated lady, suddenly cured of a passion for a young married woman, against which Mad. de Genlis had long and vainly preached. She had argued the matter with him morally, prudentially, sentimentally; she had even, like Mad. de Sevigné (in listening to her son's confessions, respecting *Ninon*,) tried to get in "*un petit mot de Dieu*:" but it was all in vain, until a shawl "*peau de lapin*" effected what the charming eloquence of Mad. de Genlis failed to produce.

He had the night before attended his "*chère belle*" to a ball: she sent him to her carriage for her shawl. He flew to be the bearer of the *superbe cachemir*, breathing its kindred roses; but (death to every finer feeling of fashion, taste, and sentiment) the laquais drew from the pocket of the carriage—a shawl *peau de lapin*!!! "*Plus de prêchements donc, ma chère comtesse*," added the convalescent lover, "*c'est une affaire finie*! Never can love and rabbit skins be associated in my imagination; and believe, my dear madam, *qu'il n'y a pas d'amour à tenir contre un schall, peau de lapin*!"

The modern revolutionary *mouchoir de poche brodé* is a great refinement upon the royalist *pocket-handkerchief* of other times. This elegant expensive little article is as indispensable to a Parisian fine lady, as the *cachemir*; and its effects occasionally seem equal to that of the "charmed handkerchief of Othello; which did

"An Egyptian to his mother give,
To make her amiable."

A gentleman once accused my charming friend, Mad. la Comtesse d'H**le, of having no lace or embroidery

on her handkerchief. She laughed at his observation : " You are in the wrong," he replied, "*car il n'y a rien, qui monte la tête d'un homme, comme le joli mouchoir d'une jolie femme.*"

Every season has its peculiar *lace*, in France, and the annual festivals of the church are not, even *now*, observed with more punctuality, than the transition from *point* to *Malines*, or from *Valenciennes* to *blond de fils*, as their respective seasons recur.

" *Comment donc, monsieur,*" said one of the gentlemen of the court to *Monsieur D***, looking at his ruffles; "*vous voilà en point, au mois de Mai !*"

" *C'est que je suis enrhumé,*" was the excuse for the heaviness of lace, which is strictly appropriated to the winter season.

From the Majesty of France down to the most insignificant of his subjects, every bridegroom in the kingdom presents the "*trousseau*," or bridal wardrobe, to the fair object of his election; and I observed that I never entered the morning apartment (which consists of the bed-room and the *boudoir*) of any young married woman, that the elegant *corbeille* and *sultane* did not present themselves among its most splendid decorations.

When the day of the royal nuptials of the Duc and Duchesse de Berri approached, the royal *trousseau* appeared to me to have become an object of national concern; at least to the court party. Wherever I went, I heard nothing but "*when* is the *trousseau* to be seen? *Where* is the *trousseau* to be seen? Have you got tickets for the *trousseau*?" &c. &c. &c. Field-mmarshals talked of it; ministers discussed it; veterans guarded it; poets sung it; and journalists eulogized it. It ran through

all the alphabetical distinctions of "A was an apple pie;" and *peers* and *deputies*, *ordonnances* and *bugets* were forgotten in its discussions.

The first day of its exhibition was reserved for the royal family, who found in this revived ceremony, in favour of caps and petticoats, the return of that glorious reign, which so solemnly took cognizance of *parasols*. The next day was for the court and French nobility. The four following days were given to the gratification of such of the public, as had influence or interest, to obtain *tickets of admission* from the Thuilleries. Of these, there was no lack; as it was a sort of state policy to revive a taste for gauzes and flowers, and "leather and prunella," in a degenerated people, who for twenty years back had been formed

"De se donner l'air d'aimer sa patrie,"

and to think as little of these important *accessories* of *legitimate* power, as if their ancestors had not *bled at every pore*, to provide them for the best dressed kings in Europe.

The population of Paris make the most accommodating and the civilest crowd of any metropolis in the world. I never on any occasion saw the French character forfeit its politeness and urbanity, but on the occasion of the "*trousseau*." There the importance of the object overcame all forms and ceremonies; and the efforts, the struggles, that agitated the crowds which filled the court-yard of the *palais des menus plaisirs*, occupied its vestibule, and climbed its great stairs; the frightful press; the irresistible crush; the interference of the generals, too often unavailing; the cries, the ejaculations, the

prayers, the fears, altogether rendered the entrance to the royal *trousseau* one of the most awful, as well as most dangerous scenes, I ever witnessed.

At last, after full *two hours'* efforts, and more suffering from heat and apprehension than I ever endured, we passed the last barrier (for there were *four* to overcome, all guarded by *mousquetaires*, with their bayonets fixed,) and arrived at the *palladium* of the royal *toilette*. A long suite of beautiful rooms were thrown open, whose lofty walls were thickly covered with robes of every hue, tint, web, and texture, from the imperial drape of coronation-splendour, to the simple robe-~~de~~chambre of British lace and British muslin; from the diamond coronet to the *bonnet-de-nuit*; while platforms or counters surrounding each room, were guarded off from the unhallowed touch of plebeian curiosity by silken cords, and placed under the *surveillance* of the priests and priestesses of the toilette, in *grand pontificals*. These formed the sanctuary of all the *minor attributes* of the royal wardrobe. Every article of female dress, from the most necessary to the most superfluous, was here arranged, not by *dozens*, but by *hundreds*. Here queen *Sheba* might have died of envy—here the treasures of the “forty thieves,” or the “*cave of Baba Abdalla*,” were rivalled or surpassed, not only in splendour but in quantity. The life of the old Countess of Desmond would have been too short, though spent in dressing, to exhaust such a wardrobe as here presented itself; and if such was the sumptuous provision to be made for the future *daughters of France*, it may be truly said, that “Solomon, in all his glory, *was not arrayed like one of these*.”

Among the spectators of these fairy treasures, I observed many of the *new old* French military. The *croix de St. Louis* sparkled on every side, and ambulating ribbons vied with those which hung stationary on their silken lines. "*Mais, c'est du dernier goût !*" "*c'est du dernier galant !*" "*c'est superbe !*" "*c'est magnifique !*" was echoed from the lips of those, who may be soon called on to give the word of command, which is to succeed to the "*en avant*" of a more energetic leader.

The triumph evident in the looks of these *chevaliers de la bonne cause*," and of the dames who accompanied them, as they surveyed all the "pomp and circumstance of glorious" dress, was a proof how strongly it recalled to their memory or imagination that *millennium*, for which they have so long sighed, and now beheld fast arriving. *This was* going back at once to the halcyon days of Louis XIV. when more money was expended in fitting out the *trousseaux* of the nieces of the king's mistress, than would have pacified the murmurs of the famished people, who loaded the favourite with execration, and withdrew from the sovereign the title of "GREAT," which he had never truly merited, and which he long survived.*

* The king was so liberal in his donations to Mademoiselle D'Aubigné, when she married the Duc de Noailles, that even Mad. de Maintenon feared that "*le peuple n'ait le droit de lui reprocher d'enrichir ses nièces au dépens de l'intérêt public.*" But when the Cardinal de Noailles wrote her word that the people *cursed* her, she coolly replied, "*S'il me maudit, c'est qu'il ne me connaît pas.*" The wedding presents of the king to the favourite niece, were the government of several provinces to her husband, a pension of two thousand crowns, as pocket-money for herself, the same salary from the duché de Burgundy, diamonds to the value of fifty thousand livres, and eight hundred thousand livres, as a *présent des nêces*.

While France, degraded by her actual position, groans with ill-stifled indignation, as she beholds herself in the thralldom of those powers she so lately held in subjection ; while she is urged by her necessities to seek her resources in foreign wealth, to pay the foreign troops, under whose jurisdiction she exists, the policy may be questioned, as well as the taste, of thus exposing to the eye of a divided people proofs of such boundless extravagance and idle vanity.

When the marriage of the future queen of England lately took place, no such insult was offered to the people. The idol and the hope of a free nation, her look of health and smile of joy were the sole exhibition it sought and hailed with manly, heart-felt satisfaction. The people of England demand only in their legitimate rulers the accomplishment of those promises, which obtained the throne for their family, who were not *legitimate* ; and who, elected by the people, expelled from the nation the frivolous, bigoted, and oppressive race, *who were so*. For the rest, for "*purple and gold, and fine linen* ;" for princely wardrobes, and royal toilettes, they have no respect ; and, interested in concerns of dearer moment, they leave such "*unsubstantial pageants*" to the admiration of the waiting-women and *valet-de-chambre* of the royal household. Idle and degraded as the crowds, who darkened the courts and chambers of the *Palais des menus plaisirs*, during the exhibition of the Dutchess de Berri's toilette, must have appeared, in the eyes of strangers, and particularly of *English strangers*,

Shortly after these donations, Mad. de Maintenon observes, "*Il n'a pas un sous. Les moyens d'avoir de l'argent irritent ; parce qu'ils sont tous violens.*"

it may be said upon this occasion, as upon all others, which call the character of the French nation into question, that *Paris has a population for every thing*:—for royal *trousseaux*, and free *constitutions*; and that, amidst the various, motley groupings of its extensive society, will be found some of

“ *The brightest, wisest, MEANEST of mankind.*”

FRANCE.

BOOK IV.

PARIS.

Que Paris est changé ! les Velches n'y sont plus ;
Je n'entends plus siffler ces ténébreux reptiles,
Les Tartuffes affreux, les insolents Zoïles.

* * * * *

Mes yeux, après trente ans, n'ont vu qu'un peuple aimable,
Instruit, mais indulgent, doux, vif, et sociable.

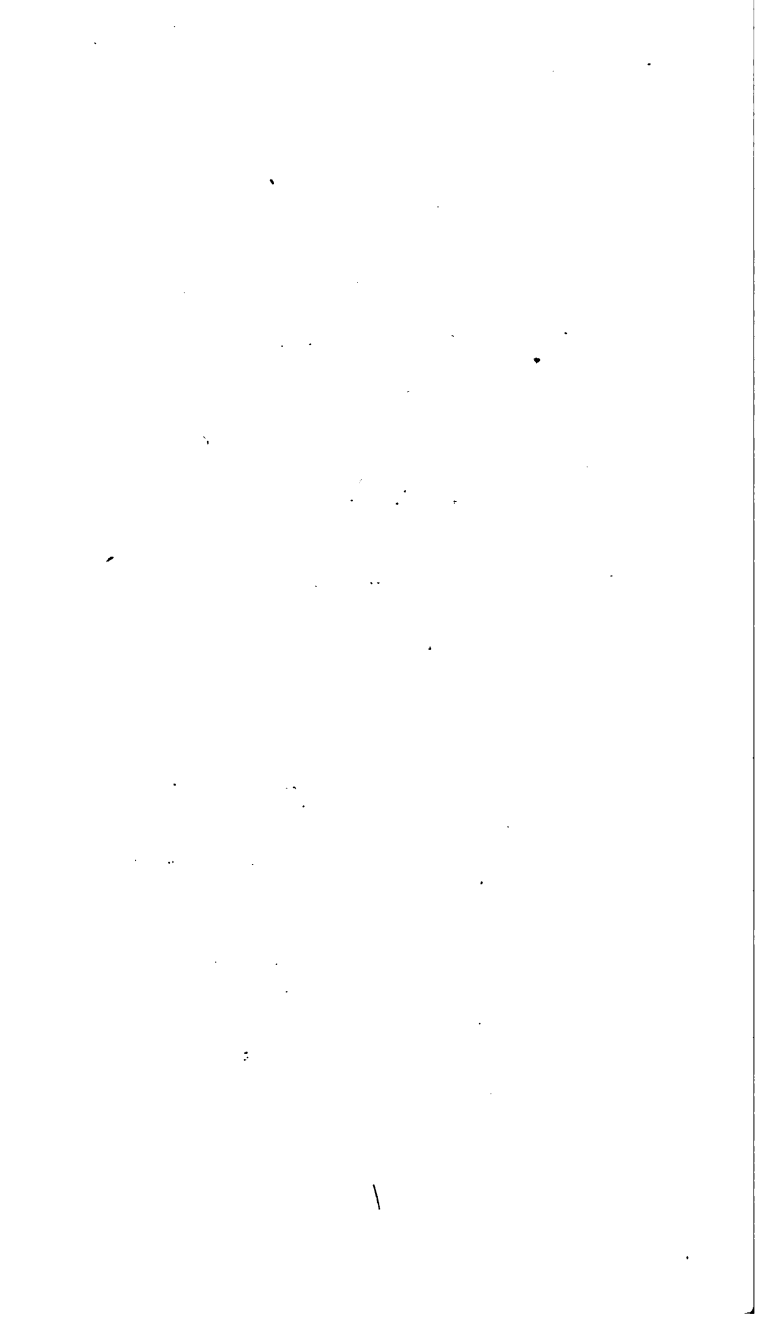
* * * * *

De la société les douceurs désirées
Dans vingt états puissants sont encore ignorées.
On les goûte à Paris, c'est le premier des arts ;
Peuple heureux ! il naquit, il règne en vos ramparts.

VOLTAIRE—*Epîtres.*

Je me suis emparé d'une heureuse matière ;
Je chante l'homme à table.

BERCHOUX.



FRANCE.



BOOK IV.



PARIS

Habits of the Parisian Table.—Petits-Soupers.—Déjeuners à la fourchette.—Château de Plaisance.—Vincennes.—Chapelle expiatoire.—Hospitality.—Dinners.—The Soirée—The grande Réunion.—The Bal Paré.

IN the great social *bouleversement*, which occurred at the first period of the revolution, every habit of life, connected with the old regime, submitted to the general change, and was abolished in favour of some new mode, leaning to the extreme of opposition. All was suppression and substitution. Even the highly-prized *petit-souper*, whether as the domestic passover of family reunion, or as the *point de rassemblement* of pleasure, wit, and fashion, shared the law of proscription; and the substantial *revolutionary breakfast*, the *déjeuner à la fourchette*, was established, as more conformable to the laws of republican ethics, and more favourable to the preservation of health and morals. These breakfasts, however, with all the air of republican simplicity ascrib-

ed to them by their founders, were far from being composed of the black broth and bread of Spartan frugality. They combined every species of luxury and extravagance, instituted a new class in what Montaigne calls "*la science de la gueule*," and by the wit and *gourmandise* of some of their presiding *hierophants*, added a new and very humorous branch to the high burlesque in French literature; while they refined, and multiplied the resources of the *gastronomic* art to infinitude.

Before the revolution, few persons of any rank took a regular breakfast; even their dinner was not always the most substantial or luxurious meal; nor ordinarily that of etiquette. The hebdomadary dinners, given by the professed patrons of wit and talent to authors and artists, and those of ministers and men in office, form nearly the sole exception. The supper, on the contrary, combined all that was brilliant in society, and elegant in display. "*Le Duc de Luxembourg ne dinoit point, et ne se mettoit pas presque à table*," says Rousseau, describing the daily habits of the Château de Montmorency; adding, that the dinner there was but a slight repast, taken usually in the open air, "*et comme on dit, sur le bout de banc; au lieu que le souper étoit très long*."

To these suppers, given at nine miles distance from Paris, the *gens comme il faut* of the capital constantly resorted. The minister du Choiseul and the Prince de Condé were frequently among the guests, who drove out of town to a supper, as the fashionables of London now assemble for a late dinner, at their villas in its neighbourhood.

In the time of the regency, it appears that Mad. de

Simiani, the grand-daughter of Mad. de Sevigné, supped at seven o'clock. Even then, however, this was deemed an early hour, and was said to have been adopted, to accommodate her reputed admirer, the celebrated Massillon, who was obliged to return to the *Oratoire*, his place of residence, before nine.* Down to the days of Louis XVI. the French supper was sufficiently early to admit of every kind of party being formed, and enjoyed, after it was over. It was then the card table was *made up*, pharo commenced, and the ball began. This meal was, in fact, but little different from the present English *late* dinner; and as upon these occasions all the *recherche* of cookery was displayed, and every temptation was given to intemperance, the *souper* was at least unwholesome; and it induced the physician Dumoulin to declare, "*qu'il ne se relevoit jamais pour un homme, qui n'avait pas soupé.*"

Of these once elegant and fashionable entertainments, not a trace now remains. The only suppers I saw were very slight and simple refreshments, after the *bals parés*.

The most usual, and indeed the most fashionable evening collation, is "*le thé*," which, without being strictly the English tea, or the French *goûter*, formerly taken between dinner and supper, combines much of

* This eloquent preacher and pious divine is traditionally reported to have been very gallant, and susceptible to female charms. It was at one of these *soupers, tête-à-tête*, that he is supposed to have made the following stanza:

"Aimons nous tendrement, Elvire;
Ceci n'est qu'une chanson,
Pour qui voudroit en médire,
Mais, pour nous, c'est tout de bon!"

what is *best* in both—the exhilarating beverage of sou-chong and hyson, with confectionary and ices, found only in France; and *green tea punch*, not excelled even in Ireland. I have heard, however, many a veteran disciple of the gay, exciting *petit souper*, place this substitution among the worst changes effected by the revolution, and lament in pathetic terms, that

“ Par un abus coupable,
Les soupers sont *proscrits*—on déserte la table.”

Coming into France with the old impressions of “*frogs and soupe maigre*,” I was surprised to find that all that has been said of the excellence and substantiality of a Scotch breakfast, was rivalled, if not exceeded, by a French *déjeuner*. The morning after we arrived at *La Grange*, the venerable château of General La Fayette, we found his family of three generations assembled in the *salon*; and the breakfast was announced, as formally, by the *maître-d’hôtel*, as the dinner had been the day before.

On descending to the *salle-à-manger*, we found a long table profusely covered with roasts, ragouts, dressed fish, pastry, salads, fruits, and sweetmeats, with all sorts of wines, while tea and coffee were served round, *pour la digestion*; and the French breakfast literally ended where the English one begins. This style of breakfasting I found universal in every house, where I became an inmate; and they were not few. It has been adopted within the last twenty years by persons of all parties, who have remained in France during the revolution; many of whom, while they execrate the event, adopt and approve the modes and habits of life, which it has originated.

The *déjeuner à la fourchette*, taken in the middle of the day, is among the most fashionable entertainments of Paris, during the spring season, and is usually given at the *maison de plaisance*, or villa, which is considered as a sort of half-way house in a half-way season, between the Parisian *hotel* and the provincial *château*; while the *petite maison* is now as little known as the *petit-souper*; and both have fallen together with the state of morals and manners, which instituted them.

It was at one of these charming villas, on the shores of the confluence of the Seine and Marne, that I assisted for the first time at a *déjeuner à la fourchette*, as a *fête d'étiquette*. The invited guests, rather select than numerous (which is the case in all French entertainments,) assembled in their *calèches*, berlins, cabriolets, and barouches, in the court-yard of the hôtel de Chabonais, as the starting point, for the *château de Plaisance*, where the Comtesse d'Hossonville, the "*véritable Amphitryon*" of this delightful day, awaited to receive us.

It was a brilliant morning of a true French summer. Our route obliged us to pass along the Boulevards Italiens and St. Antoine; and the gaiety, the variety, the splendour of these beautiful roads, crowded with fantastic groups, vibrating with cheerful sounds, and shaded by lofty and luxuriant trees, presented a scene of animation, peculiar to that pleasurable scite of life and bustle. In passing through the once elegant *quartier* of the Marais, the hotels of Madame de Sevigné, Ninon de l'Enclos, de Beaumarchais, the ruins of the Bastille, and the stupendous monumental elephant of Buonaparte, were successively pointed out to us. These were curi-

ous landmarks to awaken, in so short a space, an host of associations, and to revive, almost at a single *coup d'œil*, recollections of very different epochs in French history, and in French society. It was our good fortune to have in our carriage Monsieur Dorion, the author of *la bataille de Hastings*, and of many other poetical works; and never, surely, did the sojourners in a strange land find a kinder friend, or a more intelligent guide, than we experienced in this most accomplished gentleman. His kindness and attention began with our arrival in Paris; and it has far from terminated with our departure from France.

Having passed the boulevards, the cheerlessness and silence of the environs of Paris, at once succeeded: for this great capital, unlike London, is totally without those "*suburban prolongations*," which, pursuing the track of the great road, extend themselves in double rows of habitations, in the front of dusty meadows, and stunted trees, and combining the *désagréments* of rural and of city life, form a combination, which

"Is not the country, you must own,
But only London out of town."

With the exception of the venerable woods, the village and terrific fortress of Vincennes, which we left on our right, no object presented itself to attract our attention, from the pleasant conversation we enjoyed in our own *calèche*.

Arrived at the *château de Plaisance*, we found its elegant mistress ready to receive us in the salon, which, by its *parquet*, its painted wainscots, and massive furniture, recalled at once the vignettes, in which the hero-

ines of Marmontel, the "*Clarices*," and the "*Céciles*," are depicted in rural retirement, and in which the *localities* of French manners are so faithfully portrayed. The gardens, the plantations, and the green lawns of *Plaisance*, are in their neatness, taste, and arrangement, all *English*; but the house, the furniture, the scite, the associations, are genuinely *French*.

When that gallant and accomplished voluptuary, Charles VII. at once indulging his taste and his passion, amused himself in the society of Agnes Sorrel, with laying out the *parterres* of Mehun sur yèvre, while, devoted to love and pleasure, he permitted the Bedfords and Talbots to overrun his kingdom, and allowed "Henry of England" to be crowned at the metropolitan church of France,* it was reserved for the syren, in whose chains he was spell-bound, to rouse him from this fatal dream, and to urge him to feats of force and valour, which recovered his kingdom, and procured him the title of "*le victorieux*."

It was after these victories, which diminished the English power in France, and produced the celebrated peace of Arras, that the king recompensed the elevated passion of his mistress, by giving her the territory and *château de Plaisance*, with the *Isle de Beauté*, near Vincennes, "To the end," says the old chronicle, "that she might be in *fact*, and in *name*, *Dame de Beauté*."†

* Henry VI. crowned in the church of Notre Dame, at Paris, in 1431.

† "On la nommoit," says Hainault, "Madame de Beauté; c'étoit le nom d'un château proche de Vincennes, que le roi lui avoit donné; et elle méritoit bien de porter ce nom. Elle avoit l'âme élevée, et aimoit surtout le Roi." *Histoire de France*. T. i. p. 384.

The *château de Beauté* was built by Charles V. one of the best of the French sovereigns, at the same time that he finished Vincennes.

In the vicissitudes of time the lovely territory of *Plaisance* and *Beauté* became the property of the Comte de ***, whose grand-niece and sole heiress, the present Comtesse d'Hossonville, now inherits it by his bequest. I know not what "nameless grace" Agnes de Sorrel may have possessed, to have captivated royal hearts; but if her manner and conversation had any thing of the elegance and charm, which distinguished those of the present *Dame de Plaisance*, I can well credit their influence and fascination.*

The *déjeuner à la fourchette*, though exhibiting great *recherche* in the delicacies of the table, is by no means confined to their enjoyment. The collation over, the *salle-à-manger* was deserted for the open air; and while some few of the party adjourned to the billiard-room, the rest accompanied Madame de Hossonville through the gardens and plantations, rich in flowering shrubs; whence, assisted by her historical recollections, we discovered, "*Le fief des moineaux*," the little feudal territory of the sparrows, which Agnes de Sorrel had herself thus named, from the colony of birds which had settled there. Here, perhaps, in the very walks through which we were loitering, the powerful Georges de la Trimouille and the brave Dunois may have paid their chivalrous

* The Comtes d'Hossonville were *grands louvetiers de France*, and the father of the present count held that office, under Louis XVI. The Count de H— is among those of the ancient nobility who have rescued a great part of their property from revolutionary seizure. He now hunts on his patrimonial territories, as his father did before him, and is as keen a sportsman, and as devoted to the pleasures of the field, as any Norfolk squire. He was chambellan to the late emperor, being obliged, like many other of the higher nobility, who remained under his government, to accept of office; and he is a peer of France, under the present arrangement.

court to the "gentle Agnes;" Alain Chartier may have sung her praises; and the honest and unfortunate Jacques de Cœur have received her testamentary commands, when she dictated to him her last wishes, respecting her favourite *Isle de Beauté*.* Here, too, perhaps Louis XV. first "drank delicious poison from the eyes" of Mad. de Chateauroux: for it was at an entertainment given at Plaisance, by the grand-uncle of Madame d'Hossonville, that that monarch first beheld the most beautiful, and apparently the most amiable, of his mistresses.† Of the ancient château of Plaisance nothing remains, except some subterraneous passages, and at a little distance from the modern building, *les portes de beauté*, old dismantled gates, which open from the village of Nogent into the forest of Vincennes.

On our return to the house, *liqueurs* and a *bouillon* were served; and our carriages being ordered, with the addition of Mad. d'Hossonville's, who returned with us to Paris (for she had only left her hotel in town, to preside at her *fête* in the country, we went to "*promener en voiture*" through the forest, and to visit the castle of Vincennes, *en chemin faisant* to the capital.

Despoiled as the forest of Vincennes has been, from time to time, it still presents a very imposing and noble aspect. In that part, which immediately surrounds the castle, and which is called the park, Louis XI. planted

* *De Cœur*, her confidential friend and executor, was accused of her death. He served Charles VII. faithfully as minister of finance, but, like the unfortunate Maid of Orleans, was abandoned by the king, and sacrificed to the intrigues of his enemies.

† The first year of Louis XV.'s reign was passed at Vincennes, where he held his court, and in the neighbourhood of Plaisance, which he sometimes visited.

a surface of three thousand feet, chiefly with oak ;* and the spot is still marked, where the pious king, St. Louis, in the primitive simplicity of those rude days, held his court and presided in council, under the shade of trees, planted by his predecessors.†

The castle of Vincennes rises in the skirts of the forest. It was once the residence of the kings of France ; and it has been too often the tomb of the victims of their uncontrolled despotism. We found the village of Vincennes full of bustle and company ; the *drapeau blanc* floated over the towers of the fortress ; a band played "*vive Henri Quatrième*," before a rustic altar, crowned with lilies, and groups of military drank *vin ordinaire*, in loyal potations, before the door of every *guinguette*. The royal family had just left the village as we entered it : they had visited it on the occasion of a review. It was also some royal holiday, and there was a dinner given by the officers of the garrison, at the principal *auberge*. All admittance to the fortress was at first refused, for it was not open to the public. But an officer of rank, who was of our party, having written a note to the governor, Mons. Puyvert, he immediately sent an order, which

* Louis XI. made his barber, Olivier, surnamed *le diable*, the concierge of Vincennes. It was in his reign, that state prisoners were first committed to its dungeons. It is curious to observe that this Louis, one of the greatest monsters that ever lived, was the first who took the title of *Most Christian King*, and received the appellation of Majesty, "*peu connu jusqu'alors*," says Hainault.

† Mainte fois ai vu que le bon saint, après avoir oai messe en été, il se allé *ébatre* au bois de Vincennes. Il se seoit au pied d'un chêne, et nous fesoit seoir très auprès de lui ; et tous ceux, qui avoient à faire à lui, venoient lui parler, sans qu'aucun *huissier*, ni autre, leur donnât empêchement."

JOINVILLE. *Collection de l'Histoire de France.*

unbarred every gloomy portal, and unfolded to our view the dark entrance of that

———“*Château malheureux,
Aux beaux esprits, hélas ! si dangereux.*”

While this little arrangement was making, we had ample time to contemplate the imposing exterior of this ancient edifice. The draw-bridge, its flanked towers, and above all its *donjon*, so often the prison of worth, talent, and sensibility, seem to have been spared by time, as monuments of the dreary and terrific influence of bigotry and tyranny over human happiness.* Vincennes was always a place of strength. Rebuilt in 1337, by Philippe de Valoise, and finished by Charles V. it has since merely received some trifling accessions of strength, and it still retains much of its original appearance. On gazing upon the terrific aspect and immense height of its memorable *keep*, I found it difficult to understand, how pleasure could be so arbitrary in its views, that even kings should have sought it in such a building ; and that the early Charles's and Louis's should have chosen the towers of Vincennes, “*pour se soulacier, et s'esbattre,*” as the old language of the quaint Joinville has it.

When we had passed the draw-bridge (so often crossed by the brave and the unfortunate, with spirits subdued by oppression, and hearts broken by a sense of injustice,

* “*En passant devant Vincennes,*” says Rousseau, “*j’ai senti, à la vue du donjon, un déchirement du cœur, dont on remarqua l’effet sur mon visage.*” It is a curious instance of the shortness of popular conceptions, that the citizens of Paris, after destroying the Bastille, should have suffered this fortress to stand. It is a place of considerable strength ; quite a *place de guerre*, made as it were on purpose to overawe the capital, whose faubourgs are within the range of its cannon.

and tyranny,) we found the first court filled with artillery and ammunition, with all the frightful and formidable apparatus of warfare. Every object upon which our eyes rested was meant for the destruction of man; for the abridgement of his liberty, or the annihilation of his existence. A species of melancholy attraction riveted my eyes upon the *donjon*. I had so often read of it: so much of that chivalrous spirit of France, which early in life had captivated my imagination, expired here; sometimes quenched by violent or ignominious death, sometimes wasted away in slow, silent, life-wearing oblivion. So much of the bold, fearless genius of philosophy had here sustained persecution, through the harassing medium of promised liberty, protracted imprisonment, and all the wearying alterbations of suspense, that it seemed to me a monument of suffering, a "brief chronicle" of times, dates, and events, suddenly presented to my view, round which the associations of youthful study, maturing reason, and long cherished principles; closely rallied. There was not an ivy-twined loop-hole, a time-tinted bastion, belonging to this frowning dungeon (so long the terrific instrument of the caprice of tyranny, ingulging any victim whom power, thwarted in some darling passion, might hurl into its noisome cells,) but had a specific power to awaken sadness, and to rouse indignation.*

* *Mons. de Luxembourg a été mené deux fois à Vincennes, pour être confronté. On ne sait point le véritable état de son affaire.*—Seigné.] The mystery, which for some time hung over the fate of the brave Marechal de Luxembourg, was so profound, that not only he was himself kept ignorant of his crime, but his friends were in doubt, whether he was confined at Vincennes, the Bastille, or some other state prison. The crime of which this brave man was accused, who had fought so many battles for Louis XIV., was sorcery. "*On ne parle plus de Mons. de Luxem-*

Many, indeed, of its features still remain, to recall the sad events which have occurred within its dreary walls. The casement still exists, through the bars of which the great Condé cultivated his pinks, during his long incarceration. His original crime, and the cause perhaps of all his after errors, was his devotion to a beautiful wife, whom he refused to resign to the romantic passion of a grey-headed king. The chamber is still pointed out, which was occupied by Diderot, when he was sent to Vincennes, for the publication of his letter "*Sur les aveugles*;" where, goaded by a sense of the injustice of which he was the victim, his great and luminous mind had nearly sunk under the blow; for his reason was only saved from a total overthrow, by a timely alleviation of his sufferings.* In this fortress also, Mirabeau, during a five years imprisonment, wrote his beautiful letters to the frail and fair Sophie, and composed his able work against *lettres de cachet*, of whose abuse he was himself a victim.

But while events connected with the scanty portion of civil liberty, enjoyed in France for a thousand years before the revolution, crowded upon the memory, association suddenly snapped its chain; and our own gallant Henry V. dying in the *donjon* of Vincennes, and resigning his conquered France into the hands of his brother Bedford, occurred to my remembrance. An host of

bourg. J'admire vraiment comment les choses se passent," says Mad. de Sevigné; and in fact a few days after the secret imprisonment of the Marechal, the oblivion of the grave hung over the life and fate of a man, who, a short time before had filled all France with the echo of his feats.

* Some personal traits in his work against a Mad. Du Pré de St. Maur, were the cause of his detention in this prison.

images rose with this interesting recollection, and *Hal* and *Falstaff* cheered for a moment the gloomy reflections, which conjured up their delightful vision.

Our party consisted exclusively of *ultras* and *royalists*; and for them, and indeed for us, there still remained an object of interest and of sadness, within the dreary rounds of Vincennes, which was no phantom of memory, but had its

“ Local habitation, and its name,”

and which struck at once with its melancholy influence on the senses and imagination. We had received permission to visit the “*chapelle ardente*,” raised to the memory of the young and gallant Duc d’Enghien, by the Duchesse d’Angoulême. We were conducted to a wing of the fortress hanging over the *fossé*, in which the Duc d’Enghien had been shot, and which fronts the forest. The concierge met us at the door of his apartment, and lighting a lamp, conducted us up a dark, narrow, winding staircase, rendered more sombre by the contrasted brilliancy of the setting sun, in which, a moment before, we had been basking.

As we reached a landing place, considerably elevated, the lamp’s flickering light suddenly gleamed on the polished firelock of a sentinel, who guarded the melancholy post, and who carried arms to the military orders and stars of some of our company. To find here, within the compass of a dark and narrow space, so confined, that tired vigilance could scarcely measure its wonted pace, an *armed guard*, had an effect that went at once to my heart; for it had never before throbbed amidst the terrific gloom and imagery of a state prison.

It is not impossible that this soldier now guarded the remains of the man, whom when living he had here also guarded in that short moment, which intervened between judgment and execution. To him the innocent and the guilty would be a charge of equal moment, and equal interest; for the creature of force, its instrument and its victim, the soldier takes every station his trade assigns him. His very nature, broken down to the voice of command, dissolves all the feelings, faculties, and passions of man into the great and paramount law of *obedience*—to-night, in the gloom of the castellated ditch, raising his murderous aim, and reaching the life-pulse of the royal d'Enghien; to-morrow, irradiated with the glories of the rising sun, he hears the voice, he had haply obeyed in many a nobler cause, now give the word—" *My comrades, to the heart!*" and the gallant Ney falls beneath his arm;—the theme of every *soldier's* praise, over the watch-fires of distant fields lies bleeding by the *soldier's* hand.* Oh, these are views of human conduct; these are scenes of human suffering, which sicken the heart and wither up its powers! Here civilized society loses its splendour, and the development of the human faculties seems but to multiply the power of doing evil!"

The savage, whose joys and sorrows, whose life and death are governed by the laws and passions of nature only, here for a moment, stands opposed in proud superiority to that erring, cruel, and vain-glorious creature, to whom civilization has lent but half its light; who, in his dangerous progress through semi-barbarism,

* The day before my visit to Vincennes, I had stood upon the spot where the unfortunate Ney was shot, at the extremity of the gardens of the Luxembourg.

has learned to *pervert* not to *improve* his faculties, to tread on the rights of others, not to respect and preserve his own; and who, substituting power for happiness, and ambition for justice, seeks to become *great*, without endeavouring to become *wise*.

To the right of the narrow landing-place, thus strictly guarded in darkness and in silence, we were shown the little room which the Duc d'Enghien occupied during his short, sad dwelling in the fortress of Vincennes. To the left, a larger apartment, in which his hasty trial had taken place, exhibited a most gloomy and imposing spectacle. Daylight was wholly excluded, and the room was laid out as for a funeral chamber, *une chapelle expiatoire*; it was lighted day and night by a lamp (*la lampe ardente*,) which hung from the centre of the ceiling. The walls were draped with white cloth, bordered with black; a low ottoman, of the same texture, ran along the floor. In the middle stood a hearse, covered with a velvet pall, richly embossed in gold, with the arms and trophies of the house of Condé. It veiled a small coffin, which contained all that could be collected, from the ditch of Vincennes, of the gallant d'Enghien—a few bones. A stone, on which, it is said his head had fallen, was placed beside it. In the back of this gloomy scene, hung a massive silver cross. Twelve immense wax tapers, in large silver branches, burned on each side of the bier. To the right was an altar, a crucifix, the sacramental vessels, and all the imposing paraphernalia of the ceremonies of Catholicism. Here is daily celebrated a mass for the soul of the deceased. Here, on the preceding day, Madame d'Angoulême had offered up her *oraisons*, at the shrine of her habitual devotion. Here slumbering sorrow might be

roused into ceaseless vigilance ; and vengeance brood over images, created and combined to give it everlasting force.

The recollection of the fate of the unfortunate prince, whose unburied bones were thus placed in melancholy spectacle ; the fatal policy which may, or may not, have necessitated his death : the *fossé* pointed out where he had been executed ; the fortress itself, all produced a train of melancholy impressions, which I thought not easy to be effaced. We withdrew from the *chapelle expiatoire* in sadness and in silence, and the eyes of more than one brave and devoted champion of the Bourbons swam in tears, as we quitted the remains of one of its most illustrious and gallant defenders. But the sun was still shining brilliantly : it was a *French* sun ; and we were a *French* party : we ascended our carriages, and bidding adieu to the gloomy towers of the Château de Vincennes, the coachmen cracking their whips soon brought us to Paris, and set us down at the doors of one of its gayest spectacles, the Comic Opera.

As we entered Mad. d'Hossonville's box, we found the delightful pastoral drama of "*Rose et Colas*" half over ; but we were in time to hear Pouchard in some very pretty *vaudevilles* ; and to witness the first representation of "*Plus Heureux que Sage*," a piece which was condemned beyond all hope of redemption, notwithstanding the fine singing, and the elegant and spirited acting of that most lady-like actress, Mad. Regnaut. We waited to see the first act of the old farce, "*Les Femmes Vengées*," which, by the authority of time, maintains its privilege of wearying the patience of the audience, by a succession of impossibilities, only

relieved by traits of coarse humour and vulgar pleasantry. We then adjourned to the first restaurateur in Paris, where, over an excellent supper, we discussed the amusements of the day, and decided on the merits of the *salade de volaille* and champagne of Mons. Beauvillier.

“ L’homme machine, l’esprit qui tient du corps,
En bien mangeant, remonte ses ressorts.”

No one seemed exhausted ; all had been amused ; and the *déjeuner à la fourchette*, which began so gaily, at midday, finished as gaily at midnight. I was, however, convinced, that this genuine French entertainment was calculated only for the elasticity of French spirits, for the enjoyment of a people whose resources are infinite ; and who, more animated than active, depend rather upon their mental than upon their corporeal energies, and know no weariness but that which springs from inertness, and the absence of intellectual occupation.

Several *déjeuners à la fourchette*, given to us by friends resident in Paris, succeeded to the *fête champêtre* at Plaisance, and, like that, they usually occupied the whole day. After one of these entertainments at Mons. Dorion’s, we spent the afternoon in visiting the fine library of the celebrated Mons. Langlès, and some other private collections, finishing the evening at the Theatre Français. At another, given by Mons. Denon, we found ample and delightful amusement in examining the collection which occupies his apartments. Over all these hospitable feasts great refinement of manners, and an unclouded gaiety, universally prevail-

ed, and banished the tedium so oppressive in the morning amusements of a less mercurial people. The custom in France of introducing *conversation into society* has a decided and very happy influence on the spirits and faculties of its members, at whatever season of the day they may assemble ; and time rarely passes “ flat, stale, and unprofitable,” to those, whose intellectual resources engage and diversify its hours, and “ make to-morrow cheerful as to day.”

An English gentleman, resident at Paris, assured me that an Irishman whom he had known in France many years, left his small fortune to the *only Frenchman* who had ever offered him *a dinner* ; at once to mark his own gratitude, and the rarity of the event. The outcry, indeed, amongst the strangers who now visit Paris, against the want of hospitality in its inhabitants, is much more universal than it is well founded. Thousands have visited and continue to visit France, from every part of Great-Britain, who have not even been so fortunate as the Irishman already cited. The particular position, indeed, of the English, with respect to the French nation, is not, at present, extremely favourable to the interchange of the rites and ceremonies of hospitality. But at all times, the French are neither so eager after society, nor so much in want of it, as to send “ into the highways and lanes,” to pick up such indiscriminate foreign guests, as may be inclined to accept an eleemosynary invitation, and to satisfy, at the same time, their appetite and their curiosity.

No hospitality, and indeed no fortune, could hold out against those legions of the idle and the unoccupied,

who, in the exuberance of wealth, or of undirected curiosity, leave England, to—

Promener leur ennui ailleurs.

The French, at all times circumspect in their societies, and averse from large and indiscriminate assemblies, have not learned to extend their circles, or to multiply their invitations to strangers, since circumstances have inundated their capital with the people of all nations and countries.

The *obscure*, the *unknown*, and the *unnoted*, have therefore but little chance of obtaining admission into good French houses, of any party or faction, if not *particularly recommended*, by letters or personal introduction. And I have known many self-sufficient persons, the centre of their own little domestic circle, the agreeable rattles of some particular *coterie*, wounded in the very life-nerve of their *amour-propre*, on finding themselves lost and confounded among the “vulgar herd” of strangers, who, through the medium of that *passe-partout*, money, are allowed a free ingress to all public places ; but who go no further. These are the persons, who found a character for nationality, by exclaiming against every country but their own ; and who fancy themselves patriots, upon the presumption of their preference for home. They feel not that their *ennui* and distaste, in foreign countries, are seated within themselves ; and they mistake their individual displacement for the dislocation of society.

Few persons, I imagine, well introduced by letters of recommendation, or by their personal talents, or celebrity, will join in this outcry against French hospital-

ity ; or will deny that the access to a French house, where the stranger has once been received, is both easy and gracious. It is, however, quite true, that dinners of ceremony are by no means so general in Paris, as in London or Dublin. In the latter capital, hospitality has long lost its simple character ; it is no longer the medium of social enjoyment ; but the lure to ostentatious competition. Few desire to entertain, who cannot dazzle or outvie. Ruin too often treads on the heels of festivity ; the means and the measures rarely meet and are rarely calculated, while the spirit of display is in operation ; and he, who in justice to his children and his creditors, should not even indulge in " humble port," does not hesitate to treat his guests with "*imperial tokay*."

The princely revenues of the English nobility, the immense opulence of the trading class of that great commercial country, while they multiply the artificial distinctions of society, permit an expenditure in entertainment, favourable to every competition of vanity, or of pride. In France, where property is more equally divided, where none are enormously rich, and none (it may almost be said) are absolutely poor, the modes and habits of hospitality are proportionate to the means ; and in the absence of display, they are directed exclusively by a taste for social and conversational enjoyment.

The public and ministerial dinners are like those of the same description in other countries, and the dinners of the arch-chancellor Cambaceres, the hierophant of modern gastronomy, were, under the imperial dynasty, models of elegance and of luxury. Still, however, the

French dinner is, generally speaking, in all its arrangements simple and unpretending. The length of the invitation seldom exceeds a few days, and is suited to the uncertainty of all things human. It has frequently happened to us to be asked to dinner, from reviews or other morning amusements, by some one or other of the party we accompanied. The additional covers were the only difference in the economy of the table, occasioned by our partaking the *fortune du pot*; and if all was not "more than hospitably good and moderately plentiful," the never-failing excellence of the cookery, at least, contradicted the aphorism of Berchoux, that

"Un dîner sans façon, est une perfidie."

It is a maxim borrowed from epicurism, and adopted into the code of French good-breeding, that "*un véritable gourmand ne se fait jamais attendre.*" To be punctual to the moment, is a point of good-breeding rarely neglected. The guest is received in the anti-room, by all the servants of the family; and the arrangement of the French apartments being generally *en suite*, the *salle à manger* is almost invariably passed in arriving at the *salon*. It frequently happens that the table is only laid a few minutes before the dinner is served. That ceremony, therefore, which consumes hours in an English house, and occupies the time of so many persons, is effected with a sort of magical celerity in France. But where all is for mere use, and nothing for display, time and trouble must be necessarily spared. There are no showy sideboards, no rich buffets, in the French dining-room; and though the table service is always of silver, yet in the first houses, ornamental

plate, and articles not immediately necessary to the accommodation of the guest, are nearly unknown.

As there is rarely head or foot to a French dinner table, the hosts generally occupy the centre. The removes are confined to the middle of the table: there are usually two short courses, with a dessert, and a number of stimulating *hors d'œuvres*, almost unknown in the economy of an English table. To those accustomed to "*raisonner principes sucrés*," the French dessert will be found, in the language of Mons. de la Reyniere, "*de parler à l'âme, et surtout aux yeux*." A thin light Burgundy is the diluting beverage, which holds the place of our malt liquor; and the superior wines are not drunk till after the first course, when the domestics serve them round. Cape wine or Malmsey are taken with the dessert. The art of cookery is supposed to have long reached its utmost point of perfection in France. It is a science, which all have studied, which all understand, but which it has been long deemed *mauvais ton* to expatiate upon, or discuss. All such conversations are now reputed to smell of the *revolutionary times*, when the most *roturier* persons, raised from the shop to the palace, piqued themselves on the *friandise* of a table, to which they had hitherto been strangers; and were proud to display their superiority over the "*cuisine bourgeoise*," by discussing *côtelettes à la Maintenon*, or deciding on the merits of dishes, once confined to the *menus* of aristocratic tables.

The skill and science, which our young men of fashion display at table, who wish to found a reputation by living *en garçon*, have descended in France to the *garçons*, or waiters at the *restaurateurs*; and I remem-

ber a certain La Croix,* who occasionally attended our *cabinet particulier*, at *Le Jacques*, whose oracular judgments on the dishes or wines he wished to recommend, were equally amusing and instructive; and in England would entitle him to a professorship, should the art ever be raised to the dignity of a science.

At the end of the dessert, every one rises from table; and coffee (such as Mahomet might have drunk, to dream himself into his *third heaven*), with *liqueurs pures et factices*, are ready prepared on a stationary table in a corner of the salon. This table universally exhibits an *English tea equipage*, designed equally for ornament and for use: and the silver tea urn and tea cadet are rarely omitted. A conversation of a *petit quart d'heure* concludes the dinner engagement; the carriages and cabriolets draw up; every one pursues the pleasures and amusements of the evening as he thinks proper; and no one remains where he dines, except by particular invitation, or that it happens to be the *soirée* of the lady of the house.

It has occasionally happened, that our dinner invitation has included an arrangement for a "*promenade en voiture*;" and in the fine evenings of a French summer, nothing can be more delicious than these after-dinner drives, taken by a large party, with which the intem-

* Asking La Croix's opinion, upon the choice of some *liqueurs* we wished to purchase, he threw himself into the attitude of a declaimer at the Institute, and talked in terms equally scientific.—"*Tenez, madame; on doit considérer les liqueurs sous deux rapports, pures et factices. Par exemple, 'Le Henri Quatre,' et 'le parfait amour' sont factices. le curaçoa et le kirsh-wasser sont pures,*" &c. &c. This dissertation of La Croix, which I took down verbatim, is almost equal to the treatise on "*La moutarde considérée philosophiquement.*"

perance of the men never interferes; and to which pleasure, health, and recreation, equally contribute.

One of these pleasant promenades, in which I was a party, had for its object the lovely grounds and gardens of Mousseaux; situate at the extremity of Paris, near the fauxbourg du Roule. We broke up from dinner at seven o'clock, mounted our carriages, and in half an hour were set down at the place of our destination, the once celebrated "*petite maison*" of the late Duke of * Orleans, the temple of his dissipated orgies, and of his political intrigues. The house, or rather the pavilion, is of Grecian architecture, correct and chaste, even to coldness and uniformity; but still elegant. The "*jardins Anglais*," once known as "*Les folies de Chartres*," notwithstanding the occasional *conceits* of gothic ruins and *attic temples*, *cascades* without water, and Alpine bridges without precipices, are still beautiful, luxuriant, and noble; and the place, the company, the weather, the climate, all considered, few hours in my life have been more pleasantly enjoyed, than those passed amidst "*Les folies de Chartres*." The moon had risen on our rambles, before we returned to the hotel, from which we had set out. We found the *soirée* of Madame de C—— already assembled, and English tea at midnight concluded our very agreeable dinner party, with its "*promenade en voiture*."[†]

* Mousseaux, or, as it is now spelled, Mouceaux, under the imperial regime was a *maison de plaisance* of the *archi-chancelier de l'Empire*. I know not to whom it now belongs, but its gardens are opened to the public.

† The late hours of new France are much reprobated by the primitive old gentry, who exclaim against dinners at half after five, or six o'clock, and who believe that at last "*les Parisiens, à force de retarder l'heure de dîner, finiraient par ne dîner que le lendemain*."

The French *soirée* is literally *an evening at home*. Almost every woman of condition in Paris has a *soirée* once or twice a-week. Some ladies are "*at home*" every night, or rarely go out except to the court, to the opera, or the theatres.* During the *soirée*, visits are received and paid, as on other evenings; for the evening is the usual time for paying *morning visits* in France; and once admitted to their enjoyment, no further invitation is necessary. These little assemblies, given without expense, and resorted to without form, present the state of Parisian society in its most favourable aspect. Neither vanity nor ostentation interfere with their ease and simplicity; there is no gambling, no full dress; the women go in *demi-toilette*; and as, in Paris, illumination is extremely cheap, and the apartments always well lighted, the whole additional expense of the *soirée* is included in tea, or some very slight refreshment, served a little before midnight. Society is therefore not a point of competition, but a source of genuine enjoyment. It never leads to ruinous extravagance; it is supported by no newspaper eulogies; it awakens no rivalry, and gives no heart-burnings; and the lady, who entertains, does not estimate the pleasure of her party by the number of titles that fill her rooms, nor by the expensive rarities that crowd her supper-table; for wit, pleasantry, and good conversation hold an uniform ascendant over peers, and pine-apples, chalked floors, and peas at a guinea per quart!

The weekly *soirée*, at some of the great houses in Paris, amounts to what is termed a *grande-réunion*, or

* We had above twenty houses open to us, on different nights in the week, during our residence in Paris, where we were always sure of being graciously received, and of finding good society.

large assembly; in which the coquettish *demi-toilette* gives place to full dress; and the society assumes more of the bustle and brilliancy of an English rout. A few days after our arrival in Paris, a card of invitation from the English ambassadress, and another from the Princesse Louise de la Trémouille, for the same evening, afforded me an opportunity (as I went to both) of comparing the assemblies of the two nations. We passed through long files of English carriages, which filled the Rue St. Honoré, in approaching the hotel of the English embassy: the halls and anti-rooms of that magnificent hotel were filled with domestics, in the splendid liveries of the Stuart family. Lady Elizabeth Stuart stood at the door of the first salon, to receive her *multitudinous congress*, which poured forward in endless succession, from all nations, but chiefly from England, Ireland, and Scotland: and her ladyship went through the laborious task of reception (in all the routine of a London assembly), with as much grace and courtesy, as if weariness and exhaustion did not inevitably attend upon such an exertion. Faces with which I had long been familiar, in the circles of London: faces, that I thought I had left behind me in Ireland, presented themselves, on every side. All was the buzz, bustle, and motion of an English rout. Every one stared, every one talked, and nobody listened. The refreshments were abundant, exquisite, and various; and an elegant supper was prepared, to follow the consumption of orgeates, ices, and *ponche glacée*. Without waiting, however, to partake of this supererogation of hospitality, we passed on at an early hour from the hotel of the British embassy, to the hotel de la Trémouille.

The hotel de la Trimouille is situate in the centre of the Rue Bourbon, as it ought to be ; for the names have not often been disunited.

The Rue Bourbon is a grand, gloomy, Patrician street ; always the residence of the ancient nobility of France, whose venerable hotels still frown, on either side ; like monuments of past grandeur. Scarcely a sound disturbed its silence, as we entered, and the *réverbères* but feebly lighted the high, dark walls of the spacious courts, which shut in from vulgar view the residence of hereditary grandeur.

One *single rap* announced the arrival of the guests ; and the *porte-cochère*, without any visible agency, slowly opened, as if governed by the wheel of a convent gate. On either side of the court, carriages and cabriolets were sheltered in the *remise*, or were drawn up in close file ; and our own servant conducted us, through the silent lofty hall, up the broad stone stairs to the anti-room, where, consigning our persons and names to the guardianship of the *maitre d'hôtel*, he took his own seat in an arm chair, by the stove. We followed our guide, as he flung open *les grands battans*, in proceeding through the suite of rooms.

All the apartments were splendidly lighted : we found the billiard-room occupied by players, or by lookers-on at the game, which in France is played so well, and so generally, by both sexes. We passed on to the grand salon, and found a large circle, all seated ; all conversing, and all animated, yet all *at rest*. A few men only stood in groups, or, in the French phrase, *en petits pelotons*. Some leaned over the backs of the ladies' chairs, with whom they were talking. In passing on to the superb

chambre à coucher, I observed Mons. Fievé, the author of the charming novel of the "*Dot de Suzette*," receiving the compliments of a little circle, on his new political tracts ; and Monsieur de Chateaubriand, whom, having already seen at the opening of the Institute, I instantly recognized, by his folded arms, abstracted look, and air of *Arabia deserta*. Withdrawn from the crowd, in solitary magnificence, he was silently receiving the homage of some dowager-ultras ; while he, who, "saluted" every tree, river, and rock, from Paris to Jerusalem, seemed, in society, to hail nothing but his own importance.

We found the Princesse de la Trimouille, not bustling through her rooms in endless genuflexions, nor stationed at the entrance-door, the wearied sentinel of her own exhausting pleasures, but quietly lounging in a *fauteuil* in her superb bed-room,* the *sanctum sanctorum* of all splendour, taste, and elegance, in the suite of French apartments. She was looking on at a game of picquet, played by two venerable dukes, covered with all the insignia of their rank ; and this was almost the only card-table I saw, at any of the *réunions*, or *soirées*, which I frequented, during my residence in France.

The manner in which a French woman receives her female guests is extremely courteous and respectful, a little tinctured with formality, but marked by every feature of politeness and of attention. The reception of

* Nothing can exceed the splendour and taste of some of the *chambres à coucher*, in the private hotels of Paris. The walls are usually draped with rich silk or satin, fastened and decorated with gold or silver ornaments. The *couvre-pied*, or counterpane of the bed, which stands in an alcove, is frequently of white satin, richly embroidered, and trimmed with Brussels lace.

the male guests is, generally speaking, at once extremely fascinating, and yet sufficiently dignified. She never rises from her seat: she receives their profound bow with a smile, a nod, a "*bon soir*," or "*bon jour*" or a "*comment va-t-il*;" or some little mark of distinction, a tap of the fan, a hand to kiss, or an expression of pleasant surprise at their unexpected appearance. All this however is air and look; it "*is something, nothing*;" it is quite indescribable, as it is undefinable; and it would be presumption to attempt it.

De la Trimouille! Who that knows any thing of the history of France, could for the first time be in company with the representative of that illustrious family, without feeling some quickening throbs of the heart? All that is dignified in the history of the country is associated with the name. The most powerful among the *provençal* nobility, the La Trimouilles, governed the Charles's, opposed the Louis's, and assisted to place the founder of the house of Bourbon on the throne of France. They suffered martyrdom in its cause, on the revolutionary scaffold, and they now rally round the throne of the family, they have so long fought and died to support. The Trimouilles have, indeed, done more for the house of Bourbon, than the house of Bourbon could do for the Trimouilles.*

* Many of the families of the French nobility looked upon themselves as more ancient than the reigning dynasties even in the earlier ages. "*Qui vous a fait comte ?*" asked Hugh Capet haughtily of the Comte de Perigord. "*Ceux, qui vous ont fait, roi*," was the bold reply. Charles VII. weary of the rule of Georges de la Trimouille, suffered him to be arrested and imprisoned by his enemy, the *comte de Lorraine*.

It was in reference to the conduct of Louis de la Trimouille, who took

The Prince Louis, the only surviving representative of his illustrious family, has all that distinction of person and air, which indicates birth and high breeding, and is one of three of the handsomest brothers that France ever saw united in one cause.

The talents and acquirements of the princesse de la Trimouille give her a very decided influence in the circle and party in which she moves; and I observed that literature and politics were the leading topics of conversation, in her elegant and refined *ré-unions*.

The *bal-pâre*, a most frequent style of entertainment during the winter season (which season, *par parenthèse*, is literally celebrated during the *winter*, and never put off till *summer* or *autumn*,) is a combination of youth, pleasure, and gaiety, exquisite dancing, to exquisite music, splendid dressing, and light collations; while little quadrille parties, suddenly struck up to the harp and piano-forte, are not unusual in families, where there are many young people, though infinitely less frequent, than such accidental breaks on the card-parties of small English circles. All the modes of society in Paris are simple, inexpensive, rational, and refined; but they are, generally speaking, less gay, less artificial, and perhaps, at once, more formal, and more easy, than the usual ar-

Louis XII. prisoner at the battle of St. Aubin, that that wise and excellent monarch observed, after he ascended the throne, "*Le Roi de France ne venge pas les querelles du Duc d'Orléans.*" The Duc de la Trimouille was one of the secret chiefs of the Hugonot party, whose demands became so exorbitant on the gratitude of the king. The influence, spirit, and power of this family appear indeed through every page of the history of France. The late Prince de la Trimouille, brother to the present prince, was guillotined in the early part of the revolution.

rangements of society in Great Britain. Its shades, indeed, are infinite, and vary according to the rank, age, party, and means of the entertainers. Its variety, however, is not its least charm; and the characters of rank, talent, and celebrity, both native and foreign, which are met with in its countless circles, must always render them curious, interesting, and attractive to the stranger, who, without bias or prejudice, seeks in visiting a foreign land to compare its habits and manners with his own; and who, candid enough to grant to each nation its own peculiar merit, is still willing to cherish that natural and wise preference, leading to the gracious conviction, that

"The first, best country ever is at home,"

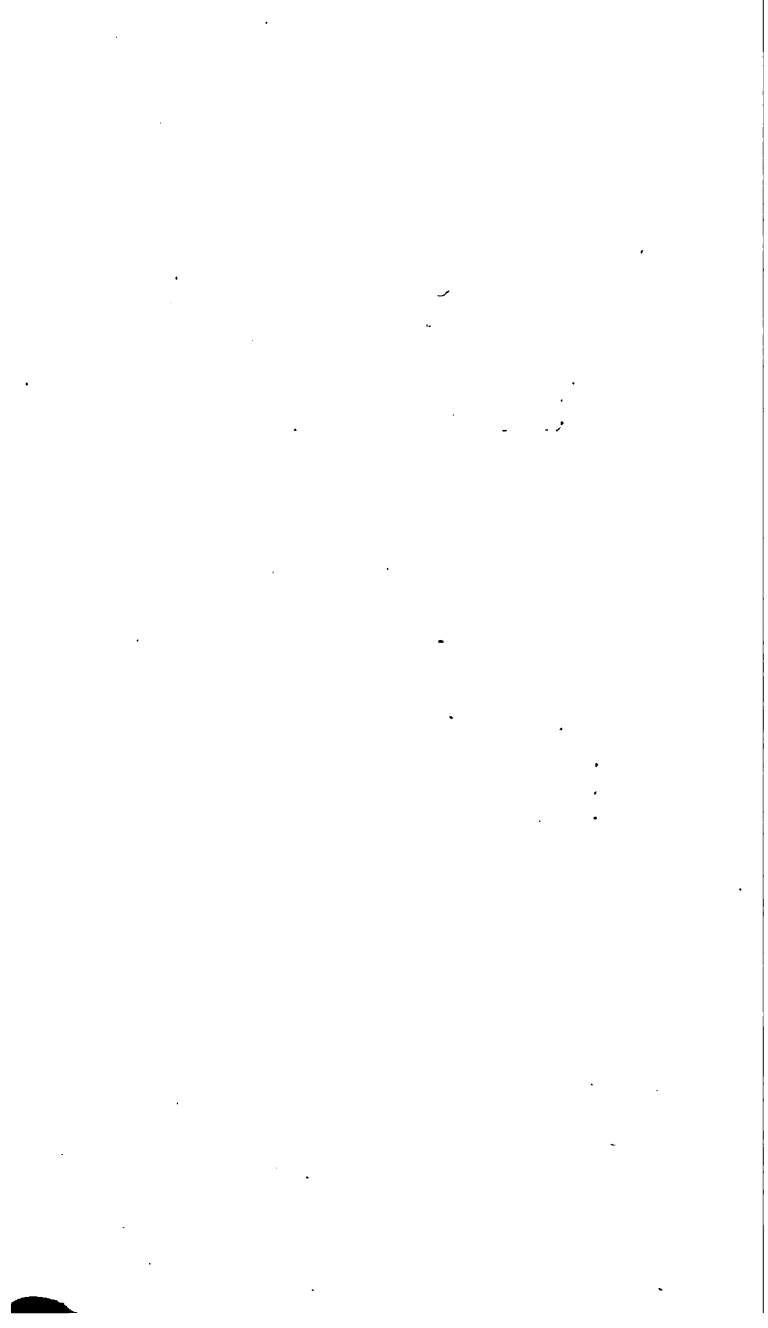
FRANCE.

BOOK V.

PARIS.

“ Des Champs Elysiens ; le pompeux rivage,
De palais, de jardins, de prodiges bordé,
Combien vous m'enchantiez !”

VOLTAIRE.



FRANCE.

BOOK V.

PARIS.

Boulevards Italiens.—General architectural arrangement of Paris.—Banks of the Seine.—The Hotel Bourbon.—The Louvre.—The Gallery.—Modern French Artists.—The Place de Carrousel.—The Thuilleries.—The Sorbonne.—The Pantheon.—Bibliothèque du Panthéon.—The Luxembourg.—Bibliothèque du Roi.—De Mazarin.—Librarians.—The Gobelins.—The Shop-signs.—Private Hotels.—Historical Scites.—Hotel de Beaumarchais.—Hotel de la Regnière.—Almanach des Gourmands.—Hotel de Sommariva.—Works of Canova.—Hotel de Craufurd.—Gallery of the Beauties of Louis XIVth's Day.—Hotel Borghése.—Hotel and Collection of Baron Denon.

MY first impressions of Paris, as a great city, were received from my entering it by the Boulevards Italiens. The rain, which had fallen in torrents as we passed the Barriere de Clichy, suddenly dispersed, as we reached the Boulevards ; and the bright blue skies of spring, and of France, lent their cloudless lustre to a scene, so un-

paralleled in *my* experience, that some one of the rich fantastic cities of Arabian fable seemed conjured up, to cheat the imagination. The "*Chronicles of the Susanians, the ancient kings of Persia*," could have afforded no gayer scite for the scenes of Scheherazade's invention, and one must have been, like her own "king of the Black Islands, half marble," not to have yielded up the senses unresistingly to impressions so new, and to images so fanciful.

The splendid avenue of the Boulevards Italiens, so worthy the capital of a great nation, once a desert, inhabited by brigands and banditti, is now lined with stately hotels, gardens, and flowery terraces, mingled with structures the most grotesque, and edifices the most picturesque;—the Chinese bath, the Turkish café, the vi-randas of an Hindu pavilion, and the minarets of an Eastern kiosk, alternately glitter through double rows of noble trees, which line their spacious scite, and which, gemmed with beams and rain-drops, were just bursting into verdure, as I passed for the first time under their shade. It was early in the evening, the moment when, in Paris, the idle and the laborious, the rich and the poor, alike forego *ennui* and work, and all unite in a pursuit, there seldom frustrated or fruitless—the *pursuit of pleasure*.

The gay multitude, which a spring shower had dispersed in search of temporary shelter, had just rushed forth in an exhilaration of spirits, which a little *contre-tems* rather feeds than extinguishes, in the French temperament. The *bouquetières* were again presenting their violets and lily of the valley to the pretty *grisettes*, who were tottering along with Chinese steps, and Chi-

these feet, not unconscious of being "*bien chaussées*," nor wholly unmindful of the glances pointed from the virandas of Tortoni's or Hardy's cafés.—The *petite-marchands* were again displaying their gay sheds, and brilliant baskets, lined with gems and jewels, "*à vingt six sous, ou juste*."—The reading-rooms, reinforced by the shower, displayed in their windows heads of every *timbre*, aching over the politics of Europe, or heating over pamphlets of domestic recrimination.

Bobèche had again taken his station on his deserted stage, and *Galimafrée*,* with his grave fatuity, was exciting bursts of merriment in his fresh-gathered audience. All seemed gaiety, life, and intelligence, and a more animated scene could not perhaps be found in the capital of any country in Europe, to greet the eye of the newly-arrived stranger, or to impress him with a more favourable opinion of the prosperity and native hilarity of its people. Were these spacious and beautiful boulevards, which surround Paris, a fair specimen of the capital they adorn, it would indeed be the proud city, "that lifteth her head on high, and saith, I am, and there is none other like unto me."

But it is far otherwise; and the boulevards, forming a splendid belt round the narrow streets of Paris, are the girdle of Venus on a mortal form. There are peculiar

* *Bobèche* and *Galimafrée* are two celebrated *Gilles*, or buffoons, who exhibit every evening on the boulevards, and are the representatives of those *Baladins*, who were anciently brought by the police, to exhibit on these boulevards, in order to draw the population of Paris to that quarter, and thus disperse the *malefactors* and *brigands*, who were wont to take shelter there. The French *Gilles* are frequently excellent low comedians—Voltaire calls the clowns of Shakspeare "*Gilles*"—and *Truchstone* himself is sometimes rivalled in wit and humour, by these extemporising buffos.

scites (such as the whole line of *quais*) unrivalled, perhaps, in beauty, interest, and magnificence, in any other metropolis;—but, taken as a whole, Paris wants that uniformity, that propriety, if I may use the expression, which should characterise a great capital. It seems rather a cluster of irregular towns, than one great entire whole. Every *quartier* is a distinct district. The *quartier* of the Luxembourg has quite the air of a country village, grouped round the castle of its seigneur; and the whole of the fauxbourg St. Germain appears like some remote and antiquated town, a thousand leagues distant from the gay modern city of the *Chaussée d'Antin*. The narrowness of the greater part of the streets is an “*original sin*,” beyond redemption; and the height of the houses, all of hewn stone, all spacious, all well built, throws a depth of shadow, which adds to their gloom.

It was among the best works of the late Ruler of France, that he spared neither money, labour, nor talent, in the improvement and beautifying of the capital; and the inhabitants, all unanimous on this point of his conduct, indicate, with grateful recollections, the avenues he has opened, the spaces he has cleared, the noble streets he had begun, the public buildings he had founded, the markets he had built, the fountains he had erected, the great sources of health and accommodation he had opened on every side, for the benefit of the citizens of Paris—When they are asked, where were his own palaces, his *Marleys*, his *Bagatelles*, his *Trianons*, and *Belles-vues*, they point to a baby-house of wood and canvas, raised for his son, in the gardens of the Thuille-

ries, and talk of the *plan* of a *future palace*, for the king of Rome.

The enormous size of the houses, in Paris, is an ancient and original error, in its architectural arrangements, arising out of modes and institutions, which kneaded their evil leaven through every particle of the great mass, and substituted power, influence, and ostentation, for rights, privileges, and comforts. A *great hotel* was, in former times, the indispensable *appanage* of aristocratic pride; and the *hotel* was usually *so much too great* for its noble owner, that, while their names shone, in golden letters, over the *porte-cochère*, they had frequently neither domestics to occupy its apartments, nor furniture to fill them.

Thus, ignoble lodgers were taken in, to breathe under the same roof with the inheritors of "*six quarterings*," and beds and tapestry were carried back and forward, from the *château* in the remote province, to the hotel in the capital: while the "*fier baron*," or noble *duc et pair*, travelled like a Tartar chief, or Gipsy captain, with his household furniture, his bag and baggage in his suite. It is curious to see the rich and noble Madame de Sevigné uneasy at not being able to let her lodgings, the very rooms occupied by that dear daughter so fondly adored—"Ce *logis* (as she herself says) *qui m'a fait tant songer à vous; ce logis que tout le monde vient voir, que tout le monde admire; et que personne ne veut louer!*"*

In another place, she advises Madame de Grignan not to bring up her beds and tapestry from the remote

* Letter LII. Vol. I.

province, where her husband was governor, at a distance of many hundred miles; not, however, that she was herself very well able to accommodate her daughter, for she had only *one bed*, according to her own confession. Still the hotel de Carnavalet, (which even at this moment attests its former grandeur) to which Madame de Grignan was about to carry her beds and tapestry, was celebrated for its sculptures, by Gougeon; its *façade*, by Ducereau, and by Mansard; and its *plafonds*, painted by the first masters of the day. Such was the *mélange* of show and splendour with every species of discomfort, and the absence of all accommodations, the sure indices of the *ostentation* and *meanness* of a *proud* and *poor* nobility.

The custom of letting out apartments, even in the hotels of the first nobility in France, is common at this day.—A shoemaker may lodge *qu sixième* with a prince; and I have seen, myself, the high-born and illustrious mistress of a splendid hotel, in the Rue St. Honoré, get into the same carriage with her English-commoner-lodger, and both drive together to court.

Oh! who, that “*has ever felt the thrilling melody*” of that little English word “*Home*,” and has known and felt its endearing signification, would willingly share it with strangers and passing sojourners? Who would not prefer the little door that shuts in all that is dearest, and closes on none beside, to the *grande porte-cochère* of a more capacious structure, the *caravansary* of fortuitous guests? Who would not prefer the small own exclusive house, the

“*Casa-mia, piccolina, che sia*”

to all the "pomp and circumstance" of the disproportioned structure, to be shared with those, one *does* not, or, still worse, with those one *would* not know?

The French nobility, however, in former times, occasionally made a nobler use of their unoccupied apartments, than in hiring them out to strangers: for they frequently accommodated indigent talent with a home; and the *entre-sols* were occupied by the La Fontaines and Marmontels, who were also the frequent guests at the tables of the La Sablières and the Geoffrins.*

There is not, perhaps, in the world, so imposing a scene, both for architectural beauty, and for historic recollections, as that through which the full swelling stream of the Seine flows, from the Pont Neuf to the Pont de Jena; the one with its reversed statue of Henry IV., now slowly reinstating on its long-fallen pedestal, where misery once came to shed her tears, and loyalty to offer her devotions;† the other marking a very different period in European history, and daily parting with its imperial eagles. It was thus I saw them both in the same hour.

To the right of the Seine rise along its banks, in splendid succession, the ancient and beautiful Louvre, the venerable palace of the Thuilleries, its luxuriant gardens and spacious terrace, and the rich groves of the *Champs Elysées*, terminating at the brow of Chailot and of Passy, which swell into amphitheatres, and

* Marmontel, however, paid for his lodgings at Madame Geoffrin's.—Though men of letters were frequently lodged gratuitously by the great, this custom made a part of their disgraceful dependance.

† From the time of the death of the "*Grand Dauphin*," the inhabitants of Paris were wont to carry their tears and their complaints to the foot of the statue of *Henry IV.*—What a eulogium!

close, by their imposing elevation, the whole magnificent scene. On the left, the *Palais de Quatre Nations*, the *Palais Bourbon*, and a long suite of splendid hotels, whose lovely gardens and plantations of roses sweep down to the river, have each their specific and opposite interest. The *Palais Bourbon*, one of the most splendid palaces in Europe, was built by Louis XIV., for his natural daughter, the Princesse de Condé, after the design of Girardin.

Although the origin of its foundation is now forgotten, the *Hotel de Bourbon*, or *Palais du Corps Législatif*, whatever name it may bear, must always be a monument of interest, and an object of admiration. Its Corinthian portico, its Grecian peristyle, its spacious galleries, its elegant pavilions, its vestibules, its colonnades, its theatre, its gardens, still remain, under different names or various combinations; (for it has gone through many changes, and been adapted to many purposes, since it was first devoted to royal enjoyment and princely pleasures.) Its state bed-room, with its golden tapestry;—its *salle de billards*, with its verdant *treillage*, and its nymphs, crowned with flowers, offering the rules of the game; its celebrated *salle à manger*, with its painted arcades, reflecting from a hundred mirrors its fairy splendours;—its far-famed *boudoir*, with its unrivalled *parquets de marqueterie*, all have inclosed far different groupes, and echoed to far different sounds, since the gallant Condés and Bourbons first trod the golden maze of pleasure in this temple, so appropriate to her orgies. It was here the council of five hundred held their rude republican assemblies. Here Carnot and La Fayette raised their last voice in the cause of constitutional

principles ; and here the fate of Buonaparte was finally decided. The *Palais Bourbon*, long named the *Palais du Corps Législatif*, has again resumed its original appellation ; and the venerable Prince de Condé, after an exile of twenty-five years, again holds his court, under the golden domes of his illustrious ancestors.*

Among the beautiful hotels, which form a line with the *Palais Bourbon*, the elegant residence of the late Marshal Ney is conspicuous. It was, at least, always so to me, as I passed it, from its peculiar air of uninhabited loneliness. The closed shutters of its lofty windows, and grass-grown pathway of its blooming gardens, then rich in full-blown plantations of roses, were strong and melancholy remembrancers.

It has been asserted by Mons. Le Breton, that France, more than any other nation in Europe, participates in the glory reflected from architectural monuments. It would be difficult to meet this sweeping assertion, backed by so high an authority, with the very incompetent knowledge of the art, which is brought to this work. But as far as my own observation went, I saw nothing in France comparable to the specimens of Saxon and

* The Prince de Condé though he has reached a term of life beyond the ordinary course of human existence, has, I am told, preserved much of the "*air de Seigneur*" and manners of the old school of gallantry, and he is particularly polite to the ladies. His senses, however, do not keep pace with his susceptibility. *Monsieur Talleyrand* being presented to him, his Highness constantly addressed him as *Monsieur le Prince de Tarente*, while some of his gentlemen repeatedly whispered him, "*Monseigneur, c'est le Prince Talleyrand.*" "*Qu'est-ce qu'on me parle donc de ce chien de Talleyrand ?*" asked the Prince, of Mons. Talleyrand himself. "*Mon Prince,*" replied M. T. "*voilà deux ans que je ne connais plus cet homme là.*" This little incident was said to have occurred while I was in Paris, and I give it as an *anecdote de salon*.

Gothic architecture, to be found in almost every part of England. The observation of Heurtier, that a taste for architecture prevailed in France, long before the revival of that art in the rest of Europe, seems invalidated by the cathedral of Amiens, which is reckoned one of their finest churches, but which was built by the English; and every other great religious structure I saw, Notre Dame and St. Denis included, is infinitely inferior, in point of grandeur, beauty, workmanship, and extent, to Canterbury, York-Minster, or Westminster Abbey. Of pure Grecian architecture, the specimens in France are few and inferior, both in magnitude and execution; while the mixed order, which prevails over their few public and numerous royal edifices, seemed to me to be sufficiently distinct and specific to take its place with the other five, and to merit the name of *French-Grecian architecture*. It may be said to resemble the *French-Grecian drama*, which presents the incongruity of modern manners blended with antique story, and the observance of the Aristotelian severities, with an adherence to national peculiarities. France has not, hitherto, shown herself the land of the sublime; she has never produced a Milton, nor possessed a Parthenon: and her highest effort, in the epic of poetry or architecture, is exhibited in the coldest poem, and the most ponderous structure, that modern times have produced, the "*Henriade*" of Voltaire, and the Palace of Versailles.

"Où les Rois furent condamnés à la magnificence."

Of that mixed architecture, which may be accounted truly and purely French, the Louvre is a perfect and beautiful specimen. Neither grand nor simple, it has

every other excellence. Rich, varied, and elegant in its decorations, at once massive and ornamented, solid and light, it appeared to me such a structure, as the wild fantastic imagination of Ariosto might have originated for one of his own fairy palaces, the magical temple of some enchanting Armida.* The Louvre is one of those objects in art, which pleases without any classical authority for pleasing. It is a splendid variety, out of all ordinary classification, and the lively emotions of admiration it excites, are certainly not referable to its observance of any rule, or its conformity to any known model.

Philippe de Lorme, and Pierre Lescot threw a brilliant lustre over the architectural genius of France, when, in the early part of the sixteenth century, they sketched those elegant and original designs, which produced a new Louvre on the site of the ancient edifice. Henry II., Charles IX., and Henry IV., all contributed to the beauty and splendour of this royal residence, and Louis XIV. was the first sovereign of France, who ventured to remove the seat of government from the capital of the kingdom, and permanently to desert the venerable Louvre,

" Le Palais pompeux, dont la France s'honore,"

(the dwelling of the Valois and the Bourbons,) for the pestilential atmosphere of the modern Versailles.

* To this *mélange* the severe taste of Voltaire objects in his well-known stanzas on the Louvre.

*" Sous quels débris honteux, sous quel amas rustique,
On laisse ensevelir ces chefs d'œuvres divins !*

Quel barbare a mêlé la bassesse Gothique

A toute la grandeur des Grecs et des Romains !"

The history of the Louvre, a recapitulation of the scenes which have occurred in its chambers, would embrace some of the most curious facts in the history of France, and furnish the tragic muse with incidents beyond her own high-wrought conceptions. It was in the midnight councils of the Louvre, that an event was planned, in cool, calculating, murderous policy, which has thrown a stain upon Catholic zeal, never to be effaced, so long as time shall perpetuate the deed ; which has given the blasted name of its sanguinary perpetrators to eternal ignominy, has painted religious fanaticism in its own true colours, and exhibited the armed power of omnipotent despotism, willing, and executing, in a breath, vengeance and massacre, in its darkest form. It was in the secret chambers of the Louvre, that Catharine de Medicis and her son Charles IX. planned the murder of all the Hugonots, in the capital and towns of France, a massacre projected and executed at the same moment, and with the same merciless ferocity and unsparing cruelty, in the most remote quarters of the realm. The balcony still exists, from which Charles fired on his subjects, on the night of St. Bartholomew, as they hurried to and fro, in horror and consternation, amidst the tolling of bells, the thunder of artillery, the shouts of the murderers, and the cries of the dying. The apartment is still visible, where the assassin Mauvriert attempted the life of the brave de Coligny : and the room is still to be seen, from which the immortal Henry IV. was dragged from the arms of his beautiful bride to the feet of the King, to hear the dreadful alternative pronounced in the midst of murderers and zealots.—“*OU LA MESSE, OU LA MORT.*”—Of unlimited

power, and religious fanaticism, the massacre of St. Bartholomew was the work, result and triumph.

The Louvre, since the days of Francis I. the patron of all that was refined and liberal, has not only been the sanctuary of the arts and sciences, but the focus of letters. It was here the French academy held the most far-famed of its sittings, when, the d'Alemberts, the Diderots, the Buffons, the Voltaires, the Marmontels, were among its members; and here all the most celebrated artists in France were gratuitously lodged, from the time of Henry IV. until the late Emperor dislodged them,* in order to enlarge and repair the edifice, for the reception of his **TRIBUTARY KINGS!** He had already named particular apartments, in his other palaces, *Salle des Rois*, in analogy with the *Salle des Maréchaux* and *Salle des Pages*; but the Louvre was destined to be the *residence* of those sovereigns, whose peculiar position with respect to the French government obliged them, at any time, to visit the modern Rome,†—

“Where menial kings ran cowering up and down.”

The Louvre had always been an object of admiration and attention to Buonaparte, during the early part of his consulship: its avenues, obstructed by miserable

* Napoleon assigned the *Palais de Quatre Nations* for the residence of the French artists, and added thirty-six of the chambers of the Sorbonne, once the dens of 300 theologians. Here young artists of both sexes, in the very noviciate of their art, were comfortably lodged, and free of all expense.

† The name of the architect of the superb *façade* of the Louvre, was for a long time lost to the admiration of posterity, until accident discovered the MS. and original designs of the modest Perault, and gave the name of their author to immortality.

and noisome streets; and the sculptures of Gougeon, the devices and the designs of de Lorme, L'Escot, and Perault, defaced or obscured by time and neglect, had not escaped his notice. He saw them,

“ Though sullied and dishonoured, still divine,”

and he resolved on restoring the building to its original splendour. The arts were rallied round their own temple, to revive its glories. By the removal of many wretched buildings, the palace was insulated, and its architectural beauties brought into view; repair and improvement went hand in hand; and the Louvre is at this moment one of the most imposing and splendid, if not the most perfect structure, that the genius of sculpture and architecture ever produced.

The gallery of the Louvre,

“ Qui sur tous les beaux arts a fondé sa gloire,”

presents an object of recent interest, which when I beheld it, absorbed all the remoter associations of historical anecdote, which connect this palace with the epochs of the country.—Commenced by Charles IX., it was finished by Louis XIV., who also erected the beautiful *façade*, the *chef-d'œuvre* of the age in which it was raised.

I visited this celebrated gallery, when its walls had been despoiled of those treasures, which, consecrated by the hallowed touch of genius, had escaped uninjured through the course of ages; and which by that law, which has disposed of empires and of nations, from time immemorial, by the *law of conquest*, had become the well-earned spoils of France. I, who had never seen

this gallery in the day of its greatest glory, I missed nothing—I had never before beheld so great a covered space. The brilliant vista, formed by its length, which seems to lose its point of termination in the mists of distance, its splendid roof, the exquisite sculpture and gilding of its architraves, left no room for reflection or regret, or for any feeling but that of surprise and admiration.

“ Vous avez enriché le Muséum de Paris de plus de cinq cents objets, chefs-d’œuvres de l’ancienne et de la nouvelle Italie ; et qu’il a fallu trente siècles pour produire.” Such was the flattering observation of Buonaparte to his soldiers, after the taking of Mantua. Of these five hundred chefs-d’œuvres, the glory and boast of France, not one remains in the Museum of the capital. The grief, the rage of the Parisians, at the moment of resigning these treasures to foreign troops, have already been well and ably painted by strangers and travellers, who were present at the time of their departure. They evince a refinement, a spirit of nationality and a cultivation, which recall all that is read and known of the people of Athens.

But the transports, with which these spoils were received on their arrival in Paris, when the Apollo of Belvidere was carried from the Porte aux Thuilles, to the Champ de Mars, accompanied by the whole population of the city, amidst shouts of joy, and of victory, were emotions much more accordant with the French character, than those of despondency and indignation, and are best described by the French themselves.—I have heard them relate the *installation* of that perfect model, which realizes all that Homer had conceived of the God of

light and genius, with an eloquence and an ecstasy, which for a moment made them forget, that they no longer possessed a treasure, so dearly purchased, so highly prized, and so reluctantly resigned.

When the French army, after crossing the burning deserts of Africa, came within view of the mighty ruins of ancient Thebes, it halted unbidden, and, by one electric and spontaneous emotion of awe and admiration, the soldiers clapped their hands, as if the conquest of Egypt was completed; as if, to behold the gigantic remains of this great city, had been the sole object of their long and painful labours, their glory, and their reward. This is one of the grandest images, which human affections have ever presented to the contemplation of the poet or the philosopher. France was then free and covered with glory, she was for a moment susceptible of the sublime, and she was worthy of the spoils her bravery had won, and which taste could thus feelingly appreciate.*

Notwithstanding the great restitutions which have been made from the Louvre, both of pictures and of

* See Denon's Travels.—The progress of the French army through the wastes and among the ruins of Egypt, was occasionally characterized by traits of great grandeur and sublimity. The soldiers, under the command of Dessaix, spontaneously broke their order of march, and halted before Tentyra, in endless admiration of its grandeur. The enthusiasm, both of officers and of men, was exhibited in an ever ready assistance to the artists, and the members of the Egyptian Institute. But history has not, perhaps, an image more magnificent to offer to the contemplation of the painter, or of the moralist, than that of Buonaparte, as yet young, as yet known only by the glory he had acquired, lost in contemplation before the mighty pyramids of Cheops; and, in the presence of the enemy's army, pointing to these gigantic monuments, as he addressed his soldiers in words, sublime as the objects which inspired them.—“*Allez, et pensez que, du haut de ces monumens, quarante siècles nous observent.*”

statues, much yet remains to excite attention. The purchases of Napoleon abroad, and his encouragement of the arts at home, were munificent. And France, besides the abundance of her own productions, the works of her Claude Lorraine, Poussin, Le Brun, Bourdon, Le Sueur, Vernet, &c. &c. was peculiarly rich in her collections of the Flemish school, and almost monopolized exclusively the *chef-d'œuvres* of Champagne and Rubens. Some of the finest productions of the Italians had long been in her possession ; and though her original treasures bear no sort of proportion to her lately acquired, and still more recently resigned spoils, of all that was most precious in the arts, still much remains, even in the gallery of the Louvre, to extort admiration from the judgment of the amateur ; and to present some excellent models of study to the artist.

On the several occasions that I visited the Louvre, (for, though it was then closed to the public, I had through the interest of friends, repeated opportunities of viewing the collections which still remained in its gallery and saloons,) I always found a number of young artists, of both sexes, who had obtained permission to finish works previously begun there, intensely occupied in copying from the Italian and Flemish pictures, which still hung on the walls ; and with a devotedness of attention, an abstraction, which left them apparently unconscious of the presence of the strangers, who passed their easels with inquisitive glances, or paused to watch the progress of their work. Many of these students were interesting young women, and some had made a considerable progress in the art. The practised eye of the professed connoisseur could alone detect the superiority

of the original they copied from. It was thus that lovely, young, and diligent, Madame du Barry was found in this gallery, in the days of her innocence, by the Comte de * * *, pursuing, from taste as well as from necessity, this mode of earning a subsistence. She little dreamed, when she abandoned this elegant and honourable mode of earning an honest subsistence, that she was abandoning her easel for a throne, and a *scaffold*!

Painting, with its sister arts, are said to have rapidly declined in France, under the reign of Louis XIV. Le Brun, a sort of *painter-laureate* to the king, basking in his favour, and armed with his authority, ruled with an absolute sway over the school of painting, unfavourable to the freedom and interests of genius. The labours of his own life were chiefly confined to the feats and history of his royal patron, which he illustrated in a series of allegories. His disciples, with almost all the artists of the day, who had no appeal from his power, and no resource against his persecution, worked in his trammels, and under his dictation. The royal palaces were thus the school and object of painting in France. The king and his mistresses, its models and inspiration, and *plafonds* and portraits, entablatures and frizes, all reflected the same cold monotony of conception. Eminence was only to be obtained, and talent rewarded, among the first artists of the day, by permission from Le Brun to participate in the great works of Versailles, or in the apartments of the Thuilleries; and it is there that the servile genius of Le Brun himself, Mignard, Coypel, de Champagne, and Noret have immortalized the egregious vanity of the king, and their own dependence. It is there, in colours which time has still spared, that,

under a hundred different aspects, *as the god of day*, Louis Apollo is represented, through a series of fulsome allegories, sometimes irradiated with a glory, supreme above the universe, which he only enlightens ; sometimes imagining the punishment of those who resist his will, in the fate of Marsyas ; and depicting, in the stories of Hyacinth and Niobe, his goodness or his power ; while the enamoured Thetis and the devoted Helianthus illustrate his *bonnes fortunes*, and successful triumphs over the frail goddesses of his own Olympus.*

Sculpture, the art which peculiarly belongs to a free country, and which has rarely flourished among slaves, wholly declined during the reigns of Louis XIII. and XIV. ; and, with the exception of the Porte St. Denis, has left nothing of these times in France, that is not inferior to the works which preceded it. Puget, the most celebrated and eminent statuary of the day, disdained a dictation to his genius, "*de par le Roi*," and preferred, as he himself expresses it, "*d'exercer son génie librement à Marseilles, à l'asservissement de Versailles*."

When Louis XV. ascended the throne, painting in France was in its lowest state of degradation ; and it was reserved for the genius and spirited exertions of Vien and Danjevilliers to redeem the art, by recommending the study of nature as the best model. David,

* The King and his painters having wholly exhausted the history of Apollo in the royal service, Mignard, a favorite painter, was ordered to begin a new series of adulation, on a new theme, and is said to have absolutely died of the fatigue of flattering the King, before he had got half through his task : leaving behind him more sky-blue robes, and full-blown roses, arrows, darts, and garlands, than any of his millinery-contemporaries in the degraded art.

by his powerful talent and practical exertion, materially contributed to this revolution and improvement, and may be said to have founded a new school, rather than to have improved an old one. But it is the first effort of change to fly to extremes ; and this eminent painter, in his profound disgust for gorgeous draperies, affected groupings, and overcharged colouring, fell into an anatomical style of drawing, which gives to so many of his noble figures their harsh and strongly defined outline ; and he became sometimes *unnatural*, by following nature too closely.* David was the first painter, in France, who ventured to banish the eternal round face, turned-up nose, and glance of mingled pertness and licentiousness, which Vateau had made the *beau idéal* of female beauty ; and he first gave to the heads of women, in historical pictures, that Grecian line of feature, and heroic cast of countenance, which distinguish the Italian school.

The arrival, in the capital of France, of the *chef-d'œuvres* of the Italian masters, came opportunely to check the progress of the new style, which, under another form of exaggeration, had opposed itself to the extravagances of the old manner. It was in the gallery of the Louvre that an altar was then raised to taste and to nature, at which all the professors of the art hastened to imbibe their inspirations, and to offer their homage. “ We did not” (said M. Gerard, speaking to me on the subject) “ we did not go to the Louvre, mere-

* The *reliefs* in all the pictures of David's, which I saw in Paris, and in those of some of his pupils, struck me to be of a strength and tone beyond that of nature, or accident. The much-admired sword, in his magnificent picture of *Leonidas*, illustrates my observation, which, however, as being simply my own, may be erroneous.

ly to imitate and multiply copies of pictures, that we deemed inimitable ; but we went to study even the minutest details : a light, a shade, a trait, a tint, in a single picture was an object of study and imitation for days together. The minutest details fascinated our admiration, as the greatest *ensemble* excited our wonder—nothing in these admirable *chef-d'œuvres* was below attention, if much was beyond our praise ; and if our progress, while we studied them, was inadequate to our efforts, our deficiency did not arise from a want of just appreciation of their excellence, or of perpetual and laborious study of the perfect models they presented to our imitation.”

It was my good fortune to have known many of the most eminent French artists, resident at Paris at the time I visited it ; and, in illustrating my page with names destined for posterity, with the names of Denon, Gerard, Girodet, Gerin, Le Fevre, and Casas, I am enabled to observe, on their authority, that the assertions made by some very recent travellers in France, that the French artists neglected the Italian masters, to form their style and taste in the schools of the Coypels and Mignards, is false, and wholly unfounded. It indeed seems impossible that any one would have ventured on such an assertion, who had visited the *ateliers* of the eminent French artists of the present day, or was acquainted with the state of the art in France, and with the utter contempt into which its former vicious school has fallen. While the best refutation of such defamatory and prejudicial assertions will be found in the *Battle of Austerlitz*, by Gerard ; the *Plague of Jaffa*, by Gros ; the *Deluge*, of Girodet ; the *Dido*, of Gerin ; the *Leonidas*,

of David; the *Endymion*, of Prudhom; the portraits of Robert Lefevre, and the exquisite miniatures and cabinet pictures of Saint, Isabey, and Augustin.*

When I first visited the Louvre, the spaces on the walls remained unoccupied, which had been lately fill-

* I know not, how far it may be justifiable to reveal the mysteries of the *atelier*, or whether foreign spectators can be supposed to hold themselves bound, by all the delicate *convenance* of native artists. I should find it difficult to conceal the exquisite pleasure I felt, from a long and admiring view of an historical picture of Monsieur Gerard's, which has lain unfinished, in his work-room, since the first entrance of the allies into Paris.—The subject is, *Achilles mourning over the Body of Patroclus*, at the moment that his immortal mother comes to console and counsel with him. The principal figures are, the body of Patroclus, Achilles, and Thetis; but the genius of the picture lies (or seemed to me to lie) in the contrast produced between the inanimate countenance of death, and the passionless traits of divinity:—in the sublime looks of the goddess, not one mortal expression is to be traced—all is the spiritual elevation of superhuman existence. In the livid features of the dead hero, the expression of all human feeling is extinct; both countenances are equally passionless—but the one is above the influence of emotion, the other only beyond its operation. The fine countenance of Achilles forms the best contrast to both; grief repressed; but not subdued—vengeance delayed, but not resigned, and struggling with the deference paid at once to the counsels of the mother and the goddess, are mingled in his beautiful features.

The Portrait of Madame de Recamier, in her *Salle de Bain*, possesses a very different merit from the grand epic of the *Tent of Achilles*.—The lovely subject of this picture seems so fresh from her bath, that the glow of its tepid vapour flushes her cheek, and mantles to her brow; and the delicate and naked foot has not yet found the refuge of the little slipper. There is, in the figure of Madame de Recamier, a sort of graceful awkwardness, which is frequently found accompanying the unstudied attitudes of a fine form, seeking ease of position, without reference to effect; and there is a sort of gathering-up of the arms and shoulders, which adds the spirit of life and motion to the flowing softness of recumbency.—Another moment, and Madame de Recamier will have lain down on her *lit de repos*, and have given to a downy slumber those charms,

“Which, sleeping or awake, shot forth peculiar graces.”

ed with the Raphaels, the Guidos, the Corregios, the Parmegianos ; and the few persons who accompanied me alone occupied the vastness of that beautiful and capacious gallery, which had contained thousands, when the nuptial procession of Buonaparte with the daughter of *Austria* passed, amidst the brilliant multitude that lined its walls, and the splendid spoils that hung on them. When I last visited it, it was filled with work-

Three sovereigns sat to M. Gerard, in the same day.—At twelve, he attended the King of France, at the Thuilleries ; at two, the Emperor of Russia came to him ; and at three, the King of Prussia took the chair vacated by the Emperor. This is a curious incident in the life of the painter, and in the history of the times.

Among the pictures, in the gallery of Monsieur Girodet, I was particularly struck by a scene from "*Atala*," and a picture of its author ; the most striking likeness that ever a portrait bore to an original. His *Endymion*, extremely calculated to fascinate a woman's taste, is, I believe, marked by the approbation of all the first judges who have seen it. An air of peculiar classical elegance presides over all the works of *Girodet's* pencil.

The modest and ingenious Gerin, of whom all his brother artists speak in the highest terms, has but one obstacle to immediate eminence—his youth.—His picture of "*Phœdra and Hyppolita*," purchased by the late Emperor, and which I saw in one of the apartments of St. Cloud, laid the foundation of his reputation, which his "*Dido*," has recently so highly raised.

The Miniatures of Saint have a strength and character, that seem almost incompatible with the delicacy of their touch ; David has named Saint, the *Rembrandt of miniature*,—as Isabey, the soft and graceful Isabey, has been called the *Raphael*. Laurent is, I believe, at the head of what is termed "*tableaux de genre*."

Among the female artists, (and there are many of considerable talent,) Mademoiselle Lesiot holds a distinguished rank, for her admirable representations of the interior of churches, &c. &c. &c.

The French artists (all, at least, with whom I have had the pleasure of conversing) appear to be men of very considerable information, without the least tinge of professional coxcombrv.

men, altering the position of the pictures which remain, and adding to their number the sea-views of Vernet; the St. Bruno; series of Le Sueur, and the historical pictures of Rubens, all of which I had seen and admired, a few days before, in the gallery of the Luxembourg, their ancient destination.—That Vernet and Le Sueur should have been transported from thence to the Louvre, might have been a matter of indifference; but it appeared to me nothing short of *profanation*, that the pictures of Rubens should have been removed from a spot, which they had occupied for nearly two hundred years—from the palace of his royal patroness, at whose commands they were executed; and who there, day after day, watched the progress of his task. It was in the very gallery of the Luxembourg, which the pictures of Rubens so long adorned, that they were painted;—it was under *his* eye they were ranged; it was *he* disposed them where they lately hung; and not a board, not a nail, in that noble apartment, but taste and sentiment would have held sacred. The pictures thus removed, now nearly fill up all the vacancies on the walls of the gallery of the Louvre, which the late *equitable* restitutions had left bare.

The *Place de Carrousel*, which intervenes between the palace of the Louvre and the *Thuilleries*, was once notable for the tilts and tournaments celebrated within its bounds, and for the courtly *melo-dramas* exhibited in it, during those days of representation, when all France seemed

“ A stage !
And all the men and women merely players.”

In 1622, Louis XIV. gave here his famous *fête* to Mad. La Valiere, and strove to win her heart by flying Turks, whose *sorties*, from the angles of the court, are said to have given it its present name, by a forced etymology of "*Quarré-aux-ailes*," originating the modern application of *Carrousel*.

The *Place de Carrousel* is now most noticed for the grand triumphal arch, raised in honour of the victories of France, chiefly gained by Napoleon Buonaparte, and commemorating in its entablatures many of their most striking events.

The close approximation of this beautiful arch to the entrance of the palace of the Thuilleries, is its greatest defect. Its greatest glory was once to have supported the far-famed horses of Venice, whose departure from Paris excited such palpable and audible consternation in the inhabitants. The golden car of Triumph to which those horses were harnessed, and which, it was said, was intended to sustain the image of Napoleon, under the form of another *Jupiter Tonans*, I saw taken down, on the eve of the *fête* of Louis XVIII. Its descent scarcely fixed the momentary attention of the idlest passenger. The restitution of the horses affected the pride of a nation, which had long learned to esteem the treasures of art confided to its care, as its prime glory, and dearest boast. For the *Chariot of the Sun*, to whatever purpose it might have been originally devoted, they evinced not the least reverence, nor for its overthrow expressed the least regret.

It was on the entablatures of this arch, that the victories of Napoleon, which so long threatened the liberties of Europe, were represented, under every form, fact,

and allegory, that the genius of sculpture or flattery could devise, to meet the eye of the conqueror, and to dazzle the minds of an intoxicated people. These well-executed triumphs lurked in the concave, started from the tympan, and rose on the frieze. The meeting of the Emperor Napoleon with his admirer and disciple, the Emperor Alexander, was among the most striking of its *bas-reliefs*. But this monument of a friendship, which, like love's frail vow,—

“..... Sweet, but not permanent,
Bore but the perfume and suppliance of a moment,”

has, I believe, long been removed; and if seen by the Emperor of Russia, in his visit to Paris, must have awakened *some* stifled sympathies, and brought to his recollection—

“..... That such things WERE,
And were most dear to him.”*

* The youthful admiration of the Emperor Alexander for Buonaparte, is well known. I was told that he imitated him in every thing, and that the republican general was very literally

“ The mirror, in which he dressed himself.

In their first meeting, at the ratification of the treaty of Tilsit, they evinced a sort of romantic fondness for each other's society, which seemed to go far beyond the usual ardors of political conferences, and of diplomatic *tête-à-têtes*; and if circumstances rather unfavourable to the romantic friendships of emperors had not occurred, the Orestes and Pylades of antiquity might have yielded the palm to these imperial friends. To these observations the following description of the *imperial embassades*, during the conferences at the peace of Tilsit, is not altogether irrelevant.

After Napoleon and Alexander met on the rafts, thrown between their respective boats over the waters of the Niemen, they entered the temporary pavilion together, and remained *tête-à-tête* for two hours. *Le len-*

The palace of the Thuilleries, inferior, in every point of view; to the Louvre, to which it is joined by the gal-

demain, à midi et demi, S. M. (Napoléon) s'est rendu au pavillon du Niemen.—L'Empereur Alexandre et le Roi de Prusse y sont arrivés, au même moment; les trois souverains sont restés ensemble dans le salon, pendant une demi-heure!—A cinq heures, l'Empereur Alexandre est passé sur la rive gauche, l'Empereur Napoléon l'a reçu, à sa descente du bateau, ils ont monté à cheval, et parcouru la grande rue de la ville, et sont descendus au Palais de l'Empereur Napoléon!—L'Empereur Alexandre y a dîné, &c. &c. Le 27, l'Empereur s'est rendu chez l'Empereur Alexandre; les deux princes sont restés ensemble jusqu'à six heures; ils ont alors monté à cheval, et se sont allés voir manœuvrer la garde impériale. A huit heures, les deux souverains sont revenus au Palais de l'Empereur Napoléon, où ils ont dîné, comme la veille!! &c. &c. &c. Les deux souverains sont ensuite rentrés dans le Cabinet de l'Empereur Napoléon, où ils sont restés seuls, jusqu'à onze heures du soir!!! Le 28. A une heure, l'Empereur Alexandre est venu faire une visite chez l'Empereur Napoléon!! A quatre heures l'Empereur Napoléon est allé voir l'Empereur Alexandre!!! Ils ont monté à cheval à cinq heures!! &c. &c.

The hour of parting at length arrived; and nothing in the histories of Damon and Pythias, or Valentine and Orson, was half so affecting as the imperial "farewell." "*Les Empereurs sont restés ensemble pendant trois heures, et ont ensuite monté à cheval; ils se sont rendus au bord du Niemen, où l'Empereur Alexandre s'est embarqué.—L'Empereur Napoléon est demeuré sur le rivage, jusqu'à ce que l'Empereur Alexandre fût arrivé à l'autre bord. Les marques d'affection que les princes se sont données, en se séparant, ont excité la plus vive émotion parmi les nombreux spectateurs, qui s'étaient rassemblés, pour voir les plus grands souverains du monde offrir, dans les témoignages de leur réunion et de leur amitié, un solide garant du repos de la terre!!*"*

"Oh world, thy slippery turns! friends now fast sworn,
Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,
Whose hours, whose meals, whose exercise, are still
Together, who twin, as 'twere, in love
Inseparable; shall within this hour,
On a dissension of a doit, break out
To bitterest enmity."

* The above is a simple and literal transcript from the journals of the day.

lery, is still a very noble and venerable structure, and forms a beautiful and appropriate termination to its own lovely gardens, and to that grand perspective which opens from the *Place Louis Quinze*. The palace, as it now stands, was erected in 1564, by Catherine de Medicis, and in its apartments she celebrated that singular *fête*, on the occasion of the marriage of the King of Navarre with her frail daughter, of which Mons. de St. Foix expressly observes :—*Peut-on penser, sans f. émir, à une femme qui compose et prépare une fête sur la massacre quelle doit faire, quatre jours après, d'une partie de la nation sur laquelle elle régnoit ! qui sourit à ses victimes, qui joue avec le carnage, qui fait danser les nymphes sur les bords d'une fleuve de sang, et qui mêle les charmes de la musique aux gémissements de cent mille malheureux, qu'elle égorge !!* This masque was, in fact, a rehearsal of the horrors of Saint Bartholomew !

It was in the *Salle des Machines* of the *Thuilleries*, that Louis XIV. celebrated many of his formal revelries, and danced, as *chef de ballet*, for the amusement of his court. It was there, also, that Voltaire was crowned, a short time before his death, at the representation of his own *Irene*. It was from its truly splendid chambers, that the unfortunate Louis XVI. was dragged to the gloomy cells of the Temple ;—there the National Convention held its assemblies ;—there Robespierre resided during his reign of terror ; and there Buonaparte dwelt, during the whole of his consular and imperial government.

It is curious to observe, that in the apartments of the *rex-de-chaussée*, occupied by Catherine de Medicis, Napoleon Buonaparte, Ex-King of Rome, held his fairy

court, at the mature age of five years; and was taught to "*représenter noblement et avec grace,*" on each returning sabbath, when he received the homage of prelates and marshals, courtiers and statesmen, wielding the sceptre of the Cæsars, *in the form of a baby's rattle*, and sometimes, when thus

"Dress'd in a little brief authority,
Playing such tricks before high heaven,"

as made his own obsequious court not, "*like angels, weep,*" but indulge in a very different propensity; for it occasionally happened, that "not to laugh, exceeded all power of face."*

While the "*baby-king*" dispensed smiles and sugar-plumbs, received homage and *confitures*, in one of the wings of the palace, and the holy representative of St. Peter lavished demi-francs and *bénédicitions*, from the windows of the other,† the grand political Roscius him-

* His majesty of Rome, though a beautiful and promising personage, sometimes indulged in caprices incidental to the wantonness of power. One morning, when his levee was unusually crowded, no arguments could prevail on the king to leave some toys, given him by the *cher papa*. His amiable governess, the Comtesse de Montesquieu, was obliged to have recourse to the authority of his imperial mother, who ordered that the rod should not be spared, and the child spoilt, but that the King should be forced into the audience-chamber, to receive his court. A person of rank, present upon this momentous occasion, when royalty kissed the rod, assured me, that no trace of the swollen cheek and tearful eye was to be found in the countenance of the tiny king; but that he at once recovered himself, and held out his hand to be kissed with so smiling a grace, that no opposition to his *royal will* could be traced, in his most gracious manner.

† The pleasure and amusement, which his Holiness found in a "*winter at Paris,*" are said to be the subject of royal reproach at the present moment.‡ The following "*substance*" of the pending negotiations, be-

self went through his several acts of imperial dignity, in the *corps de logis*, between both. Thus the feverish history of each short-lived hero of the day, who

"Struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more,"

might be compendiously illustrated in the descriptive details of a suite of apartments, as the prim house-keeper of an old English mansion recites, with her history of the blue and the green chambers, the lives and adventures of the Sir Hildebrands and the Sir Walters, who are arranged along their walls in their perriwigs and picture-frames, the "*shadows of shades*" long passed away into nothing.

The Thuilleries, in its appropriations and names, has shared the fate of all things else in France, for the last twenty-five years. The *Château des Thuilleries*, its ancient royal designation, was exchanged for that of the *Palais de Gouvernement*, and that again for the *Palais Impérial*. It is now once more the *Château des Thuilleries*, under the revived dynasty of its ancient masters and occupants, who again inhabit, and hold their courts in, its beautiful and splendid apartments.

tween the Vatican and the Thuilleries, is circulated among the *mauvais plaisants* of the French capital.

"Comment avez-vous pu faire un Concordat avec l'usurpateur?" dit le Roi au Pape, qui répond :

"Sire, je vous ai cherché par tout, et je ne vous ai trouvé, nulle part."

"Mais, vous savez bien (dit le Roi) qu'avec ma légitimité, où je ne suis pas, j'y suis."

"Cela est vrai ; (répond Sa Sainteté) mais de mon côté, avec mon infailibilité, quand j'ai tort, j'ai raison."

"Here pitch we our tents *to-day*,
But where *to-morrow*?"

* * * * *

"La docte Antiquité fut toujours *vénérable* ;
Je ne la trouve pas cependant *adorable*."

There is an air of gloomy desolation, hanging over the silent grass-grown courts of the Sorbonne, with its dark buildings and dilapidated chapel, which communicated a correspondent sadness to my imagination, as I entered it, and which not even the brilliant *atelier* of Meynier, and of Mademoiselle de ——— could dispel. As I stood in the great hall of many a theological disputation, the answer of Casaubon to one of the learned doctors, occurred to me with great force; "*Voilà une salle, où l'on dispute depuis quatre cents ans,*" said his solemn Cicerone. "*Eh, bien ! qu'est-ce qu'on y a décidé ?*" asked Casaubon.

The Sorbonne is indeed a singular monument, commemorating the facility with which mankind submit to the influence of opinions, imposed on them by dogmatising arrogance. Of all that was taught and disputed by the *doctores socii* of the Sorbonne, what now remains to benefit the interests of mankind? Who now occupies himself about the doctrine of grace, supported and argued with so much vehemence, by L'Escot and the disciple of St. Cyrian? Who now enlists under the banners of Hubert or Arnauld, in their contests on Jansenism and Jesuitism? In a little time, even the names of these doughty disputants, who had once so many partizans, and who so long engaged the attention of the public, will be consigned to oblivion. It was of this great the-

atre of theological disputation, and religious sophisms, that Pascal observes, "*Qu'il étoit plus aisé d'y trouver des moines, que des argumens.*"—But in the silent, solemn courts of the Sorbonne, there are now neither monks nor arguments to be found; and the once gloomy cells of its doctors are devoted to the most elegant of the arts, and occupied by its professors. Here, in quiet sequestration from the busy haunts of men, young and aspiring talent pursues its way to eminence, and the pencil of genius creates mythological loves, and poetical graces,* where theological brawls were once loudly re-echoed; and where the grave Coger vented his bile, in his laborious censures on the "*Bélisaire*" of Marmon- tel, and the "*Epoques de la Nature.*" The church of the Sorbonne, which cardinal de Richelieu seems to have built for the reception of his own magnificent monument, (now removed to the *Monumens Français*, is in a state of ruinous dilapidation. It is in one of its spacious vaults that moulder the remains of that once "gallant, gay Lothario," the irresistible object of every lady's love, the subject of every courtly poet's song, the Marechal Duc de Richelieu.

* * * * *

The *Abbaye Royale de Ste. G  n  vi  ve*, devoted "to all the gods" under the name of the Pantheon, during the revolution; and destined once more to desert the patronage of the heathen deities, in favour of its old christian mistress, whose golden shrine may again glitter under its magnificent dome, is a very splendid, and a very imposing edifice. From a long contemplation of its noble dome, admirable for the boldness and lightness of

* I saw here, in the *atelier* of Monsieur Meynier, some good pictures.

its double cupola, the *chef-d'œuvre* of the structure, we descended into the gloom of its subterraneous chambers, almost as extensive, but much less rude, than the crypt of Canterbury cathedral, which we had visited a short time before. Here we found several little chapels and monuments, containing the ashes of the heroes of Marengo and Austerlitz :—Here, too, we found the tombs of Voltaire and Rousseau.—The ashes of the patriarch of Ferney were conveyed hither, with solemn pomp, from the *Abbaye de Selrières*, in 1792.—The remains of Rousseau were taken from his own beloved “*Ile des Peupliers*,” and some time after were entombed in the Pantheon,* under the special direction of Cambaceres. It cannot be said of these two celebrated philosophers, that, with respect to each other, “they were lovely in their lives,” though in “death they are not disunited;” for Voltaire would, most probably, have preferred “his snug lying in the *Abbaye*,” to this close neighbourhood with Rousseau, even in the “*Temple of all the Gods!*”

Mirabeau was the first of the *profane*, whose remains were inurned within the hallowed walls of St. Genevieve. Nothing could exceed the pomp and popular grief, which accompanied his funeral, but the popular caprice which so soon afterwards deemed his remains unworthy of so distinguished a tomb; and which again removed his ashes to an obscure corner, in the cemetery of St. Etienne du Mont. “*Il n’y a qu’un pas du Capitul, à la Roche Tarpienne*,” was one of the best observations in one of his last eloquent speeches.

* The revolutionary passion for Rousseau is much abated; while the reputation of Voltaire increases with revolving years. At the time his walking cane was sold for so high a price, the *MS.* of *Julie* was put up for sale, and did not find one bidder.

The *Bibliothèque du Panthéon*, or the *Bibliothèque de Ste. G  nevi  ve*, is notable for its cupola, painted by Restaut; for its cabinet of antiquities; for its curious plan of Rome, *en relief*, and for its treasures of eighty thousand volumes. But the object most interesting to me in this valuable library, was its venerable and distinguished librarian, Monsieur Chevalier,* the author of so many well known tracts on Greece, and himself an admirable transcript of the independent literary men in France, of the last forty years; combining, in his manner, a certain impress of erudition, acquired in the closet, with all the politeness which is attained exclusively in the salon. He talked much to me, and with great delight, of his residence in England and Scotland; and made many enquiries for his more youthful and very ingenious *co-laborateur*, Sir William Gell.

The *Cabinet de Ste. G  nevi  ve* contains a collection, more curious than extensive, of natural history, and antiquities, Etruscan, Egyptian, Greek and Roman. But I saw nothing among its medals and fossils, nothing among its specimens of nature and art, that had an attraction for me equal to that of two small portraits, which decorated its walls; the one, an original picture of Mary Queen of Scots, presented, by her own beautiful hands, to the monks of St. Genevieve, and in high preservation;—the other, a *black Nun*; a natural daughter of Louis XIV., bearing a much stronger resemblance to her negro mother, than to the Roman features of her

* Monsieur Chevalier was for some time private tutor to Sir F. Burdett. I owe my introduction to Monsieur Chevalier to Mr. Warden, the late American consul, in Paris; from whom I experienced much kindness and attention. Mr. Warden is well known in the literary circles of Paris, and is the author of an excellent work, on *American Statistics*.

August father.—Of all the loves of this royal Adonis, which have reached posterity, this passion for a “*dingy dear*” is the only one, known solely through the evidence of a portrait, and authenticated simply by tradition.

When we first entered the library of the Pantheon, we found above two hundred students deeply engaged in their learned pursuits, and insensible to all that was passing around them. They were all very young men, but study had already faded many a blooming cheek, and curved many an ample brow. Some of them, as they sat buried in abstraction, might, for attitude and expression, have presented splendid models to painting or sculpture, in personifying the first career of genius, or in representing an image of studious youth, in its most picturesque point of view. This noble library is open daily to the public, from ten till two; it is chiefly resorted to by the students of the *pays Latin*; and Monsieur Chevalier assured me, that there were generally a greater number, but rarely fewer, than I then saw assembled. Take the patient, laborious, but enthusiastic student of the *pays Latin*,* the ardent volunteer, not the constrained conscript of learning and science, supporting every privation, and almost rendered insensible to want, by his devotion to study; behold him working his own way to eminence, undebased by patronage, unas-

* The *pays Latin* is the name given to the *quartier* of the Sorbonne, where the students of the many colleges, lycees, and academies in that neighbourhood lodge. Here may be found a *précis* of all the learned faculties, and the students of the *Ecoles de Médecine*, the *Jardin des Plantes*, &c. &c. &c., usually devote the hours, spared from professional study, to the public libraries, particularly to the *Bibliothèque du Panthéon*.

sisted by prescribing and scanty liberality, and he forms a very noble contrast to the frivolous *gens de lettres* of other times, living in a miserable dependence upon those, whose support they repaid by the prostitution of their talent, the loss of their time, and the sacrifice of their liberty.

The *Palais du Luxembourg*, or *Palais Conservateur*, less rich than the palaces of the Louvre and the Tuilleries, is not without its historical associations. It was erected on the ruins of the hotel of the Duc de Luxembourg, by Marie de Medicis, and became the residence of the celebrated princess Mademoiselle de Montpensier. In the apartments, where La Fosse had painted the butterfly-loves of Flora and Zephyr, now so much more beautifully represented, at the French opera, by Albert, and Fanni Bias, the romantic Mademoiselle de Montpensier* received the clandestine visits of her inconstant Duc de Lauzun; and these chambers, sacred to royal loves, to the graces, and the arts, became the prison, it may be said the tomb, of all that France boasted of virtue or talent, in the year 1793. To its gardens, then a desolate waste, now a paradise, weeping friends resorted, during the reign of terror, to catch a last look from all they held dearest, and to whom the painful indulgence was not always granted, of approaching the windows of their prison chamber.

The paintings of Reubens no longer enrich the galleries, where they were executed; but *La Baigneuse*, that beautiful specimen of modern French sculpture, still, I

* This ludicrous and enamoured old lady becomes almost interesting as the heroine of one of Madame de Genlis' charming novels.

believe, remains at the Luxembourg, to compensate for other losses !

There are perhaps, in no other capital of Europe such beautiful, such numerous, and such spacious gardens, for public recreation, as are to be found, even in the heart of Paris ; and which, indeed, make one forget its narrow streets, and close avenues, by the facility they afford to all the purposes of health and exercise. The garden of the Luxembourg is eminently beautiful : its shaded groves, its luxuriant orange trees, its statues, its fountains, the quantity, loveliness, and variety of its shrubs, and flowers—its noble palace, and its extended views, render it a perfect Eden ; while the quaint and primitive population, which resort to its walks, and occupy its numerous and commodious seats, by the simplicity of their habits, manners, and air, rather increase, than diminish, its attractions, in a stranger's eye. Less brilliant and cheerful, and infinitely less populous and fashionable, than the gardens of the *Thuilleries*—less curious and important than the *Jardin des Plantes*, the gardens of the Luxembourg are, I think, more noble, and even more a *bel-respiro*, than either of these distinguished resorts of pleasure, fashion, and science.



The riches of the public libraries, the liberality with which they are opened to readers, of every class and rank, and the accommodation and facilities provided for those who visit them, either as places of study, or curiosity, render Paris the most desirable residence in the world, to the learned, the studious, and the literary.

The *Bibliothèque du Roi*, named successively the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, and *Bibliothèque Impériale*, but now once more the *Bibliothèque du Roi*, is, I believe, deemed one of the most extensive and curious public libraries in Europe. Amidst the multitude of books which crowd on the view, it is difficult to circumscribe the imagination to that point, when its original foundation by Charles V. included but *twenty* volumes. This great emporium of bibliothecal riches fell into neglect, during the agitated periods of the revolution; but during the imperial regime it was eminently enriched, by the literary spoils of the Belgic and Italian conquests. Among the number of its recent acquisitions were several editions of works, anterior to 1476; the MS. of Leonardo da Vinci, and the "Herbier" of Haller.

Under the auspices of the learned Mons. van Prat, and of Mons. Langlés, the celebrated orientalist, we derived all the pleasures and benefit from our visit to this great national library, which it was possible to obtain from the most profound knowledge, liberal communication, and flattering attentions. What struck me most, among the many curious MS. works, which were particularly recommended to our notice, was a collection of letters, by Pope, and some writing of Rousseau's, remarkable for its caligraphy; a Virgil of Racine, with notes, written by himself in the margin; a collection of MS. letters from Voltaire to Mad. du Châtelet, written in an excellent hand, the initials of all the proper names in small character, (an error universal in modern French composition, for even Fontainebleau he spelt with a small f;) a Boccaccio, of the same date with that purchased, at so large a price, by the present Duke of De-

vonshire ; and a *Recueil* of letters from Henry IV. to the Marquis de Verneuil, perfectly legible, and highly preserved. Over this little collection I loitered sufficiently long, to put the patience of Mons. van Prat to the test, if indeed it were not *à toute épreuve*. These letters were characterised by that warmth, frankness, and simplicity, which so eminently distinguished the style and character of the mountain-bred prince, who never seems to have lost the impression of his early habits and education. I observed, that there was not one manuscript of any literary woman ; of the Scuderis, the Daciers, the Sevignés, the La Fayettees. It is not improbable, the manuscripts of Madame de Stael will form the foundation of a new branch, in the curious collection of the *Bibliothèque du Roi*.

Among the antiquities and curiosities of this splendid library, the chair of King Dagobert, in which Buona-parté was crowned Emperor of the French, appeared the most interesting, by its great antiquity and rude structure. The enormous globes, constructed in 1683, by the Jesuit Coronelli, were the most singular, and the *French Parnassus*, the most amusing and ludicrous, and peculiarly characteristic of the taste of the times, in which it was made. On the top of this *French Parnassus* appears Louis XIV. in his old *stock character* of Apollo, surrounded by the graces, (represented by Madame de Suze, Madame des Houlières, and Mademoiselle de Scuderi,) and receiving a model of the work, he crowns, from the hands of Monsieur Garnier, who presents it *on his knees*. This toy, which is scarcely worthy a place in a girl's baby-house, is described in a folio volume, under the title of "*Parnasse Français*,"

and was presented to the library in 1732, by Monsieur Titon du Tillet. The *Bibliothèque du Roi* is supposed to contain considerably above three hundred and fifty thousand volumes !

The *Bibliothèque Mazarin*,* lately the *Bibliothèque de Quatre-Nations*, was so close to my place of residence, that, fulfilling the old proverb, I visited it less frequently than most of the other libraries. Of its intelligent and very clever librarian, Monsieur Feletz, one of the most able, and indeed, most liberal critics of the day, I saw a great deal ; and I was in the habit of receiving so many *gratuitous* attentions at his hands, that those he was deputed *officially* to pay me, are among the least, of which I preserve a grateful recollection. To the *Arsenal*, and other public libraries at Paris, my visits were so cursory, that it would be presumption to mention them farther than to observe, that all are conducted with great liberality, for the public use, and the encouragement of of letters. Nor can I close this very feeble sketch of these noble and splendid institutions, without an observation, to which every stranger who has visited them must subscribe, that the distinguished gentlemen, who preside over them, present a union of urbanity and erudition, a knowledge of life and a knowledge of books, that leave no evidence, not a single trace of the dust of the closet, or the smoke of the lamp. To be at once a fine gentleman and a profound scholar, is a privilege granted but to few ; but I am certain, that it is a union more frequently existing in France, than in any country what-

*This library was directed to be sold by the parliament of Paris, during the *Fronde*, and fifty thousand francs of the produce were assigned, as a reward to whoever should take its founder, *dead or alive*.

ever ; and that it will always be much easier to find the learning and urbanity of Menage, in the libraries and salons of Paris, than the learning and brutality of Johnson, even among the most dogmatic and least polished of the members of its schools of science and philosophy.

In visiting the ancient and royal manufactory of the *Gobelins*, I was struck with the conviction of its intimate connection with absolute power, and regal expenditure. The produce of its looms, too beautiful for utility, and too costly for private purchase, is exclusively destined by the monarch to decorate the walls of his numerous palaces. Unbeneficial to commerce, and possessing no influence on the national industry, this manufacture, a dead weight upon the public purse, by its peculiar rules of government, binds the workman, from generation to generation, to an employment both morally and physically enervating ; and attaches them, like slaves, to the establishment, by rendering them incapable of adopting any other mode of subsistence. The same families have, from time immemorial, supplied the successive artists, as if the process were a birth-right inheritance, like the possessions of the Hindoo tribes. It takes the prime of a long life, to become an expert workman, and the best half of a man's existence not unfrequently goes to working the hangings of a bed-room, or celebrating, in worsted, some single incident of a royal life. To conceive the tediousness of this curious art, it is necessary to view the workmen at their labours ; but to judge of its beauty, perfection, and close imitation to painting, some of its recent productions, copying the finest pictures of the best modern artists, should be seen. The glow of

colouring, fidelity of outline, and delicacy of touch, rival the most masterly touches of the pencil.

Some fine pieces, of which the victories of Buonaparte formed the subject, copied from the works of Gros and Gerard, were in the frames, when a change, in the political affairs of Europe, produced a change in the affairs of the *Gobelins*, and the battles of Jaffa and Austerlitz were hurled into obscurity, to make way for representations of the present royal family of France, pictures of Henry IV., and trophies and devices of loyal sentiment, crowned *with lilies*. As these subjects were newly put into the frames, nothing was finished ; but the paintings from which they were to be copied, were already rivalled in the little that was commenced. The tapestry of the present day is infinitely superior to all that has preceded ; and through the kindness of the director, Monsieur Casas, I had an opportunity of judging by comparison, as he displayed for our inspection all the different stages of the art, from some of its earliest to its latest productions. The workmen looked all squalid and unhealthy ; they ordinarily rise by seniority in the different degrees of their profession, and as their moderate salaries are fixed, they know the utmost point of competency, to which their most laborious exertions can attain. They occupy small houses in the square of the building, which is usually their cradle and their tomb ; and, upon the whole, the *Gobelins* and its inhabitants left an impression of gloom on my mind, that, without lessening my sensibility to the kindness and attentions of Monsieur Casas, took from the pleasure and amusement, derived from its curious and beautiful productions.

Among the most splendid specimens of the manufacture which we saw, were a small representation of the death of Dessaix, and a very large piece, copied from the admired picture of Buonaparte's visit to the plague-hospitals at Cairo, in which he is depicted in the act of touching a plague sore, in order to inspire confidence and to revive hope. The faithful but horrible representation of disease, in all its tremendous features, and the personal likeness of the principal figures, are accurately preserved in the tapestry copy, which, at some future time, will serve to illustrate the history of the revolution. At present it is, by royal command, consigned to darkness and obscurity; and can only be visited by a special favour, of which foreigners are almost exclusively the objects. The sole benefit, which the nation can be said to derive from this costly manufacture, consists in occasional improvements in the manipulations of *dying*, by which the brilliancy of the colours has been greatly increased; an improvement that will doubtless influence the national manufacture of silk.

Of the many objects which attracted our attention at the *Gobelins*, the water-colour drawings of Monsieur Casas himself were not among the least pleasing. The scenery being taken from Greece and from Palestine, excited an interest beyond that of their picturesque effect, or exquisite finish. This gentleman being adverse to the revolution, experienced very harsh and unjust treatment at the hands of its several governments. He had dedicated the early part of his life to travels in Italy, Sicily, Greece and Palestine, collecting drawings of all the principal remains of antiquity; and he was among the many persons employed by the Duke de

Choiseul, during his residence in Asia, in illustrating the classic land of Genius and of Liberty.—From the designs he had thus the opportunity of collecting, at an enormous expense for a person of his moderate fortune, he constructed models of the most celebrated architectural antiquities; not in their present state of dilapidation, but completed from the remaining fragments, and restored to their original splendour and perfection.

Of this costly and beautiful collection, which embraces specimens of almost every country and every æra, the republican government are said to have possessed themselves by an almost forcible purchase, at a price which, though far below its intrinsic value, or even its first cost, was never faithfully paid to the vender. And to add to the mortification, the models remain to this day buried in an obscure chamber of the *Palais de l'Institut*, at the *Quatre Nations*. It is impossible for the person, who has not seen them, and who judges only from his general idea of such works, to conceive the imposing effect produced by their number, by their perfection, or by the associations they inevitably suggest. Let those who have seen the long rows of broken columns, which are exhibited in the pictures of Palmyra, conceive these splendid remains restored to their original condition, and connected into one whole, of perfect symmetry and of imposing magnitude. Imagination instantly peoples the long vista of colonnades, and fancy traces there the footsteps of a Zenobia and a Longinus. The theatre near Lampsacus, in a state of equal perfection, and fitted for scenic representation, affords an accurate idea of the œconomy of the Greek drama, and of the magnificence of its details. The majestic Par-

thenon frowns beside the superb temple of Poestum, and contrasts in its severe simplicity with the more stupendous and at the same time more florid architecture of the Egyptian temple, at Tentyra. The richness, the variety of this collection, the beauty and minute fidelity of its execution, the instruction it is calculated to convey, and the infinity of reflections it must necessarily excite, render it one of the most interesting and curious exhibitions which Paris affords; and I have dwelt more particularly upon it, from the obscurity in which it is buried, and the general ignorance I found among our countrymen at Paris, of the existence of this treasure to the antiquarian, and the artist.

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It is a curious observation of Menage, that "*les armoiries des nouvelles maisons sont, pour la plus grande partie, les enseignes de leurs boutiques.*" If this be generally true, the *armorial bearings* of the future *parvenus* of France, elevated by acquired opulence from the *shop* to the *peerage*, will present a very curious series of *heraldic* mysteries, and puzzle the comprehension of posterity. The scutcheon would not be very easily deciphered, even by the garter-king of arms himself, which should bear, on a field *argent*, a *cow* dressed in the extreme of the fashion of 1816; or "*gules*," three *Mandarins proper*, shaking together in aguish fraternity. Still, however, these new *chimerical figures*, introduced among the *cockatrices crested*, and *griffons segreiants* of older coats, have now their due signification; and intimate that the progenitors of future gentility sell *bœuf à-la-mode*, at the sign of the *well-dressed Cow*, *Rue de*

Lycée, and that Indian shawls may be purchased *aux Trois Magots, Rue de la Seine*.

Nothing, indeed, in Paris, is more amusing, than the classical allusion and sentimental devices of the signs; and the absurdity of their application adds much to the ridicule of their effect. I observed over a butcher's shop, in the Rue St. Denis, the sign of a bouquet of faded pinks, with the device "*Au tendre souvenir*." The "*Temptation of St. Anthony*," in relief, hung next door to the sign of the "*Fille mal-gardée*;" and "*Les Trois Pucelles*" figured over the windows of an army tailor, who, to extend his custom, styled himself in large gilt letters "*Tailleur civil et militaire*." While *St. Augustin* promises to "*reblanchir les vieilles plumes à neuf*," "*L'Ange Gardien*" professes "*de faire des envois pour l'étranger*," and the "*Religieux*" offers his "*Magazins des nouveautés, le tout à juste prix*."

"*Au bien-venu*!" "*Au revenant*," "*Aux bons enfans*," "*Aux amis de la paix*," are devices frequently hoisted to seduce custom; and "*La belle Hélène*," and the "*Trois Sultanes*," repeat their charms in every quarter to catch the eye, and to interest either the feelings or the taste of the unwary passenger. Even ethics are brought in to the aid of sentiment, and the dearest things in Paris are bought, "*au petit gain*," or offered for sale, "*à la conscience*."

To those accustomed only to the "*plain, honest, homely, industrious, wholesome, brown-brick houses*" of England, whose architectural taste has not been formed on the marble splendours of Italian palaces, the great hotels of Paris must, in their exterior aspect and interior arrangement, present a very striking picture both of

magnitude and magnificence. Apparently built to image the expected durability of the ancient families who were destined to inhabit them, they have, indeed, long survived the grandeur and existence of their original proprietors,* and preserve many evidences of the sumptuous and gorgeous taste of the days, in which they were raised.—Painting, sculpture, statuary, carving, gilding, tapestry, were all as indispensably necessary to “*monter un grand hôtel*,” as the rafts and beams that supported its roof; and Gougeon, Ducereau, Mansard and Coppel were called in as regularly to the construction of a noble edifice, as the stone-cutters, bricklayers, plasterers, and carpenters who put it together.

The hotels de Beauvillers, de Soubise, de Rohan, de Beauveau, de Turgot, (once de Sully; names that go so well together) to whose beauties the genius of the Coustous, Brunettis, La Maire and Vandervorts have contributed; with many others of equally ancient date, still retain something of their “original splendour,” though “*shorn of their beams*,” and more than “*half obscured*.”—It is, indeed, difficult to fix upon a place of residence in Paris, whose scite or neighbourhood is not illustrated by some dwelling of former greatness, marked out in those numerous *Mémoires*, with which French literature teems,

* Many of the tapestry hangings, in the old châteaux and hotels of France, record the family pride and sense of the high antiquity of the French noblesse. On the hangings of a room, in the hotel of the Comte de Croy, is represented a scene from the deluge; and a man pursuing Noah, with the words, “*Mon ami, sauvez les papiers des Croys*.” On a tapestry, in the château of the present Duc de Levis, the Virgin Mary was represented, saying to one of the family who stood bare-headed before her: “*Mon cousin, couvrez-vous*,” who replies: “*Ma cousine, c’est pour ma commodité*.”

or distinguished by some higher character of historic interest. On arriving in Paris at the hotel Belgique, I found we were close by the hotel de Rambouillet, where the scholastic gallantries of the Sorbonne, and the *beaux esprits* of the Port Royal assisted to found those literary *coteries*, which, though proverbial for their pedantry and bad taste, their Trissotins and Vadius's, still assembled in their formal groups some of the most distinguished characters, that France ever produced. On removing to the hotel D'Orleans in the fauxbourg St. Germain, we found our apartment hanging over the gardens, and commanding the hotel de La Rochefoucault, where the Encyclopedists so constantly assembled; where the Voltaires, D'Alemberts and Diderots were united in wit and philosophy, and where the first meeting of those *five friends* took place, who formed the subsidiary society of "*Les amis des nègres*."—Grégoire, Mirabeau, de La Rochefoucault, Condorcet, and La Fayette.

It was among some singular coincidences which occurred during my residence in France, that within view of this memorable apartment, I had the honour of receiving in one morning the Abbé Grégoire, M. de La Fayette,* the Count G. de La Rochefoucault, and his most lovely countess, a relative of Condorcet's, and the nephew of Mirabeau, the Count de Lasterie, celebrated for having introduced into France the art of engraving on stone.†

* M. G. La Fayette, the only son of General La Fayette, and heir to all his virtues.

† For this purpose a smooth compact stone, having a conchoidal fracture, effervescing with acids, but containing a large portion of argil, is brought from Germany. The subject is drawn at once upon its polished surface, with a crayon composed of materials unaffected by nitric acid,

Besides those vast and magnificent hotels, which may be deemed monuments of faded grandeur and historical glory, many of the modern edifices, which rival them in splendour, and surpass them in taste, have the superadded interest of having been raised or inhabited by persons of political eminence, and literary notoriety. The Hotel de Beaumarchais, in the fauxbourg St. Antoine, immediately opposite to the Bastille, was built at a vast expense by the delightful author of one of the most amusing, philosophical, and entertaining comedies, which any language has produced, *Le Mariage de Figarro*. The hotel de Beaumarchais, erected on the designs of Le Moine, is, I believe, meant to be a perfect *rus in urbe*: for wildernesses, grottos, subterraneous caverns, and gurgling fountains, are all assembled in a space, not much larger than that usually assigned to the flower-knot of an English villa, and seem dropped, as if by accident, in the very centre of whatever is most vulgar, bustling, noisy and coarse in Paris; where the silence of its hermitage is disturbed by the cry of "*habits, galon,*" and a butcher's shop salutes the eye, which emerges from the dark recesses of a gloomy cavern.

In the garden of this Vaucuse of the Boulevards, is a very pretty temple, raised to the memory of Voltaire; and under the shade of a willow, marked by an urn filled with the golden flowers of *l'immortelle*, repose the ashes of Beaumarchais himself. In passing over this little spot of earth, all that is spiritual, buoyant, light and fanciful, in the aërial character of the little cherubin, the "*maudit page,*" of the piquante *Suzanne*, the

to which acid the uncovered part is afterwards exposed: the process, therefore, is the reverse of etching, and leaves the subject, in relief above the general surface of the plate.

adroit *Figarro*, and the feminine countess, occurred to my memory, and formed a melancholy contrast with the associations of the tomb.

The Hotel de Beaumarchais, without being very large, contains many suites of rooms painted in fresco, but too small and too low for the English standard of handsome apartments. The *salon à manger* is remarkable for the double flight of steps, which lead to it from the *salon de compagnie*, and for the fountain of clear water with which it is refreshed. In one of the windows, which looks immediately over the ruins of the Bastille, stands a perfect model of that formidable prison, formed out of one of the stones of its own foundation. The Hotel de Beaumarchais, is not open to the public.—It is occupied by Mad. de Beaumarchais, whose advanced age and infirm state of health do not permit her to receive company; and I owe the pleasure I derived from my visit to the dwelling of a man, whose talents I had so long admired, to the politeness of his accomplished daughter, Madame de la Rue, who, if I may judge from the *éloquence du billet*, which accompanied her invitation, is the legitimate heiress to much of the playful wit, which distinguished the works of her celebrated father.

The Hotel de la Reynière, independent of the splendour of its arrangements, and the elegance of its furniture, will always have a claim to interest among the professors of the science of *savoir-vivre*, as being the house of the author of the celebrated "*Almanach des Gourmands*." This beautiful hotel was built by Monsieur de la Reynière, father of its present owner, a rich *fermier-général*, the rival of the La Poplinières, and

other luxurious and opulent *financiers* of the Place-Vendôme. The elegance and magnificence of this hotel, its superb furniture and rich gilding, give a tolerably just idea of the sumptuousness and splendour of that class of men, whose office and wealth arose out of those corrupt institutions, which impoverished thousands, to support a few in wanton extravagance, and inordinate luxury.

It was here old La Reynière put those principles into practice which his son has since so wittily resolved into systems, and of whose suppers it was said, by his aristocratical guests, "*on les mange, mais on ne les digère pas.*" An anecdote is told, which places the egotism of these noble *convives* of the old farmer-general in a very humorous point of view. Monsieur de la Reynière, after having long united, in his own person, the two lucrative places of *administrateur des-postes* and *fermier-général*, in which he was supported by the influence of certain friends at court, whom he repaid by his dinners and suppers, found himself suddenly reduced to the alternative of resigning one of those places, and complained to his noble friends of the diminution of his revenue. "*Eh! mais, mon Dieu!*" replied the Duc de * * * *, who was present, "*cela ne fait pas une grande différence dans votre fortune. C'est un million à mettre à fonds perdus, et nous n'en viendrons pas moins souper chez vous.*"

Monsieur Grimod de la Reynière adds to the inheritance of the paternal talent for the *gastronomic* art,* a peculiar humour, all his own, and as it was

* The grandfather of M. de la Reynière was also celebrated for his *gourmandise*, and the sumptuousness of his table. His death was cha-

said of him by the wits of Paris, some years back,—
*"Il alloit à l'immortalité par trois routes différentes ;
 par ses livres, par ses actions, et par ses soupers."*
 This literary Apicius made his *début*, by a parody on
 a work of Condorcet's ; and established his repu-
 tation for wit and cookery, by his "*Almanach des Gour-
 mands.*" He, however, soon left the practice of the art
 in which he excelled, and contented himself with fur-
 nishing rules which he preferred exemplifying at any
 other person's expense than his own. M. de la Rey-
 nière, therefore, has long resigned one of *his paths to
 immortality* ; and though he gives new editions of his
 work, no longer illustrates its theories at his table, for he
gives no more suppers ; nor holds any more "*Jurés de
 gustateurs.*" Mons. de la Reynière was not in Paris,
 during my residence there, but many anecdotes of his
 singular humour and *espièglerie** were repeated to me,
 by those who knew him well. I had an opportunity of
 visiting his splendid hotel, under circumstances that
 highly contributed to its brilliancy and magnificence ;

facteristic as that of Anaercon : he died of a surfeit, got by eating too
 freely of turkies' livers.

* Mad. de la Reynière, the mother of M. Grimod, is still alive, and
 occupies a wing of the hotel. She is of the *haute-noblesse*, her late hus-
 band was rather of a *roturier* extraction. It was among the amuse-
 ments of his son to invite, on the same day, to dinner, the noble rela-
 tives of his high-born mother, with some of the *bourgeois* kinsmen of
 his father ; presenting them to each other with "*Monsieur le Duc, this
 is our cousin, the baker ;*" or "*our uncle, the butcher.*" He also
 piqued himself on bringing professed enemies together at his table—
 Talma, with his severe critic Geoffroi ; Mad. Mars, with her rival,
 Mad. Le Vert, &c. &c. &c. He once hired out coaches to vex his father,
 who refused him money, and is so far from objecting to the notoriety of
 his gambols, that he is himself the first to mention and laugh at them..

for it is now the temporary town residence of the Duke of Wellington.

It was in this hotel that his Grace gave a splendid ball on the occasion of the marriage of the Duc de Berri, which, from the circumstance of all the guests coming fresh from the *grand couvert* at the Thuilleries, in their splendid court dresses, together with the illuminations of the hotel and gardens, in honour of the event, produced an effect of brilliancy and magnificence to which description can do no possible justice. In the arrangements of this beautiful *fête*, in the delicacy, plenteousness, and variety of the table, the abundant, genuine hospitality of England, the simplicity and chastity of its taste were never better represented. The *mélange* of all parties, all nations, which appeared in those rooms, closely associated under the eye of the distinguished person, who so materially contributed to effect this *moral* and *political fusion*, was a singular picture for philosophy to gaze on, and even for common-place observation to pause over and examine. It was curious to see in this congress of beauty and fashion, to which so many countries lent some of its lovely representatives, the *belles* of Berlin, Petersburg, Rome, London, Paris, Edinburgh, and Dublin—all assembled under the same roof. Buonapartist-generals, waltzing in close embrace with pretty *royalistes enragées*, and revolutionary senators linked in *chaine-entière* with *ultra*-partners, formed the best illustration of the "*Holy Alliance*," that could possibly be given. And perhaps it might have been as well for the interests of Europe, if its affairs had been thus settled in a country dance in Paris, instead of being gossiped over in council at Vienna; if a *quadrille* had

been substituted for a *congress*, and pretty women had mingled their *entre-chats* and *demi-courvettes* with the solemn motions of young diplomatists, and the slow arrangements of expediency ministers.

I remember, that in the bustling and press of this brilliant crowd, I was forced to lean against a table for support, on which rested the historical bust of Buonaparte. Before me stood the conqueror of Waterloo, in conversation with Marshal Marmont ; on either side the Turkish ambassador in Eastern costume, and Pozzo di Borgho, in his Russian orders !—What a combination ! During the whole night groups equally incongruous and extraordinary were continually repeated.

The hotel de Sommariva is enriched by some of the finest pictures of the old Italian masters, and some of the most splendid specimens of the genius of modern artists. But it is the *Terpsichore* and *Magdeleine* of Canova, that lend the de Sommariva its principal interest, if the taste, politeness, and hospitality of Mons. de Sommariva himself be excepted. The *Terpsichore* is so highly estimated, even by its unrivalled artist, that it is the only one of his works to which he has put his name. The charm of this beautiful statue is, its life !—the mysterious art, by which the Praxiteles of modern days has communicated the appearance of motion to what is motionless, and lent vitality to marble ! *Terpsichore*, with the form of a Grace and the head of a Hebe, seems almost to illustrate the art over which she presides ; and I should have felt much less surprise to have seen her spring from the pedestal, which her delicate foot scarcely touches, than I have occasionally experienced from the unexpected agility of some *human elephant*, moving

its ponderous weight by an organic impulsion, in which *life* and *will* seemed to have no part.* Still, however, with all her beauty, all her *life*, all her grace, the lovely *Terpsichore* is more than rivalled by the grief-worn form of the penitent *Magdeleine*. A small apartment, hung with dark silk, enshrines this marble wonder, which expresses in every form, every curve, every fibre, the wasting touch of time and woe; on whose cheek the tear seems lucid, or, at most, but half congealed; whose eye swims upon the gaze, and whose limbs symmetrical even in decay, exhibit a beautiful skeleton, to which the delicate muscle seems scarcely to adhere. The rough sole of the small foot tells of many a dreary step, trod in penitence and hardship, while the still rounded shoulder survives the wreck of other beauties, and the sensibility of the drooping countenance is the expression of one, who deserved to "*be forgiven,—for she loved much.*"—Whoever can look upon this splendid specimen of the noblest of the arts without emotion, must have more of marble in their composition, than the statues of Canova!

There is nothing M. Sommariva seems to prize so much in his collection, as a head of Christ, by Guido, which is framed in a box, and kept under lock and key. This saintly, sickly head, with its livid colouring and melancholy expression, reminded me of a phrase of Poussin's, that he "did not like to see Christ always painted as a

* The head of *Terpsichore* is said to be that of the beautiful sister of the ex-Emperor, Pauline, Princess of Borghese, whose charms have afforded a study to most of the celebrated painters and statuary of the day. As well as I remember, Mons. Sommariva told me this was not the case, the whole being a *beau-ideal* of a genius destined to immortality.

Père Douillet." It is, however, reckoned the perfection of the art.—On the subject of the heads of Christ, M. Denon makes a very curious observation, which has added to their interest with me, inducing me to consider them as genuine portraits. Speaking of the Jews in Egypt, he says, "*Les beaux, surtout les jeunes, rappellent le caractère de tête que la peinture a conservé à Jesus-Christ ; ce qui prouveroit qu'il est de tradition, et n'a pas pour époque le quatorzième siècle, et le renouvellement des arts.*" (VOYAGE EN EGYPTÉ.)

The *hotel de Craufurd*, one of the handsomest in Paris, is so well known to foreigners, and particularly to the English, through the hospitality and courteous* attention to all strangers, of its owners, that it might be deemed sufficient, perhaps, merely to mention it, if its elegant salons were not better known to their passing guests, than its curious and interesting picture-gallery.—Madame Craufurd must, therefore, forgive me, if I pass by her superb *chambre à coucher*, with its white and gold draperies, its porcelain tables, and silver toilette, with all the fairy suite belonging to it, the *salle de bain*, the *boudoir*, *cabinet de toilette*, and lovely *orangerie*,—and hasten, with

* The Duke of Wellington is a frequent visitant at the hotel de Craufurd, as indeed are almost all the English of note or rank. The first night I visited the hotel de Craufurd, I sat next to a very lovely and attractive young lady, who talked with so much anxiety of carrying an infant child across the channel, (as she was going to England) that I thought her some amiable little mother in private life, who had never before stepped beyond the domestic circle of a middle rank, until somebody questioned her about "*one of the Queens, her aunts.*"—This young and amiable mother was the lovely Princess de Esterhazy, who has since become so popular in England, by graces, formed to attract every where, and by virtues, which it most peculiarly belongs to England to cherish and to appreciate.

all the Memoirs of Louis the XIVth's day under my arm, to the gallery which contains the portraits of the wits and beauties of his court; the heroines of the *Fronde*, and even some of the brave friends of Henry IV. and the fair mistresses of his predecessors. Among these, the heroic *Agnes Sorrel* takes a chronological lead. She is dressed in the simple costume of a peasant, extremely like that worn by the women of Normandy in the present day. *La belle des belles* is not beautiful, but her countenance is expressive of the most perfect goodness, and I should rather say she was *La bonne des bonnes*. An old portrait of Diana de Poitiers, is most remarkable for the allusive device prefixed to it, from the Psalm XLII, "As the hart panteth, &c. &c. &c." The French missals, in former times, were usually as much a breviary of love, as devotion;—and Guernier illustrated the prayer book of the Duke de Guise, by drawing all the beauties of the court, most famous for their gallantry, as virgin martyrs, and canonized saints.

An original portrait of Marie de Beauvilliers, the lovely nun, and afterward abbess of Montmartre, who was carried off from her convent by Henry IV. and whom he describes, in the poem attributed to him, of *l'Amour Philosophe*, by

"..... Son habit blanc,
Son scapulaire—et le rang,
Qu'elle tient dedans son cloître."

This picture, though taken from its celebrated original at the age of eighty, exhibits great remains of personal beauty, not a little set off by the monastic dress. A head of the great, and unfortunate Duc de Biron, who

was decapitated by Henry IV., whose cause he had so ably defended. The countenance is very fine, and marked by an air of high distinction. A few days before I saw this portrait, I was introduced to his descendant, the Duc de Biron Gontaut ; but I could trace no other resemblance between him and his illustrious ancestor, than that they both wore very long gold ear-rings !

The justly celebrated Madame de Stael, a good, rather than an intelligent, countenance, which gives no indication of the author of one of the most amusing and spirited *Mémoires* that ever were written. Madame de Stael is here painted, as she painted herself, "*en buste*."

Madame des Houlières, too beautiful by half for an authoress—and looking more lovely things, than she ever wrote, notwithstanding the elegance of her *Idylliums*. Madame de Rambouillet, handsome but still that sort of precise beauty, one would look for in the foundress of her own *bel esprit coteries*.

The celebrated Hortense Mancini, Dutchess of Mazarine, who died in exile, and in indigence, in England. In the large dark eyes of this lovely person, all the ambition of her restless and intriguing character is strongly traced.

The handsome Duchesse de Sforze, surrounded by a number of those ugly little dogs, of which Madame de Séigné writes in such raptures, when she receives one dressed in rose-coloured ribbons, and curled and perfumed, like a young abbé *commendataire* of the old regime.

Madame de Retz, mentioned in the *Mémoires* of the Cardinal, infinitely more lovely than Mademoiselle de

Fontange, the "*chat gris*," who forms a pendant to her; both by Mignard.

The Countess d'Armanac, on horseback, with a man's cravat on her neck, and a wreath of flowers on her head: an admirable specimen of the style of portrait painting of the day.

Madame de Longueville, a most incomparable beauty, the loveliest of all the heroines of the *Fronde*; and with eyes that fairly excused the Duc de la Rochefoucault's wish to obey their commands, "*à faire la guerre au Roi*," &c. &c. It was to this splendid beauty, that the graver charms of Madame de la Fayette succeeded, in the heart of the author "*des Maximes*."

An original picture of Mad. de la Valière, by Mignard, taken in 1673, very fair, and very insipid; totally deficient in that strong expression of countenance, marked in her picture by Le Brun, taken as a *Magdeleine*, which, in making her trample on the "pomps and vanities of the world," gives her the air of a tragedy actress, in the act of taking off her ornaments, after her part is over. There is in that famous picture of Le Brun's, a robustness in the figure of the fair *Magdeleine*, with a force and energy of expression in the features, which indicate resentment, rather than repentance, and lead to the conviction that Mad. de la Valière did not consent to become "*the spouse of God*," until she had lost all hopes of remaining *mistress* to the King. This was, indeed, very near the truth; for to the last moment she "turn'd, and turn'd, and was a woman still," and only remained quiet in her convent, when she was no longer solicited to return to court.

A full-length picture of her successor, Madame de Montespan, represents one of the most perfectly beautiful persons, that art ever designed. In the sweet expression of her innocent mouth, nothing of the "*esprit de Mortemart*" seems to hover; and in her gentle countenance it is impossible to trace that violent and haughty spirit, which royal authority could not govern, and which the art of her shrewd successor could alone undermine and subdue.

Madame de Maintenon, holding the hand of the little Duc de Maine, is a perfect Hebe; bearing not the least resemblance to another original portrait, by Mignard, at a more advanced age, in which her sedate but comely countenance expresses all the good sense and ability of her character.

Madame de Sevigné, a beautiful woman, and infinitely superior in personal attraction to her daughter, whose picture gives the impression of a cold precise character, which I believe this fair disciple of Descartes really possessed.

Besides the very interesting collection of the Beauties of Louis the Fourteenth's day, the hotel de Craufurd is enriched with a few valuable original pictures; among which, a head by Tiziano, in bistre; the *Judgment of Paris*, by Rubens; and an admirable portrait of a *Squinting Boy*, by Lucca Giordini, are highly estimated.

A portrait of Descartes, by F. Hals, gives the impression of an extraordinary character! The head seems cast out of the common model of nature; the brows are perfectly angular, and the countenance marked, at once, by genius and deformity.

Philip Poisson, the comic actor and author, laughing and showing his teeth, is not to be viewed with a grave face.—But among all that is most interesting in this valuable collection, may be reckoned the fine portrait of La Bruyère, writing his celebrated maxim of “*Le contraire du bruit qui court,*” &c. He seems just to have raised his head and hand from the paper; the countenance is pale, thoughtful, and full of expression.—A fine picture of the late Emperor, by Robert Le Fevre, painted in 1810, wants only the consecrating touch of time, to give it its full value and consideration.

* * * * *

The hotel de Borghèse, the former residence of the lovely Princess Pauline, the ex-Emperor's youngest sister, is now the dwelling of the English ambassador. But, its tenants only excepted, nothing is changed; it preserves entire the original taste and splendour of the magnificent palaces granted to the imperial family, by their singular and munificent chief. It is said, that pride and affection went hand in hand in the riches and splendour lavished by Napoleon on his relatives; but all that his family vanity and boundless prodigality could do for them, was insufficient to satisfy their demands on his affection and generosity. “*Ces coquines là,*” he observed to a confidential person, to whom he was complaining of some exorbitant request of one of his sisters, “*Ces coquines là croient, que je les ai privé des biens du feu Roi notre père.*” Still, however, these requests, though always the subject of complaint, were rarely refused.

“Each pendant in their ear shall be a province.”

I was present at the sale of the palace of Cardinal Fesch. The multiplicity of his collection of statuary, pictures, mosaics, bronzes, marbles, &c. was sufficient to overwhelm the imagination. Relays of furniture, chairs that seemed of massive gold, beds that appeared made only to excite wonder, all presented a combination of wealth and splendour, which, I believe, is only to be found in France, and to which the treasures of all the continental nations of Europe once contributed.

In the hotel de Borghèse, the state *chambre-à-coucher* of the fair princess, is now a sort of audience-chamber for the British embassy. The splendid canopy of crimson velvet and gold, which shaded the slumbers of the prettiest woman in France, is now the representative of the English throne; and in the *ruelle*, where the priestesses of fashion once assembled round their idol at her *réveil*, to decide on the flow of a ringlet, or to obtain the exclusive patent of a cap, diplomacy now unravels its "*many-coloured web of good and ill together*," and the *gravest* heads in Europe are drawn together to balance political relations, where the *loveliest* once debated of the power and influence

"Of quips, and cranks, and wreathed smiles."

I recal with infinite pleasure to my recollection the hotel de Victoire, and the accomplished circle I found collected round its graceful and elegant mistress, the Countess Lefebvre-Desnouettes.* This beautiful litt

* The Comtess Desnouettes lived in great retirement, during my residence in Paris, in consequence of the exile of her husband. He has been since recalled by the king, and has resumed his titles, as Marshal of France, and Duke of Dantzic.

pavilion, as it now stands in the midsts of its blooming garden, and in the most fashionable quarter of Paris, was presented by the French nation to the modest conqueror of Marengo, on his return from the most splendid of his Italian victories.* Here General Buonaparte resided, until he took possession, in his consular dignity, of the royal apartments of the Thuilleries; and here he received that decree of the Council of Ancients, which was the "*swelling prologue to the imperial theme*."

"Glamis and Thane of Cawdor;
The greatest is behind!"

The hotel-de Victoire had been presented by Napoleon to his fair cousin, the Comtesse Desnouettes, and it retains all the elegant draperies and furniture which belonged to it, when it was presented to himself. Peculiar taste and studied elegance, rather than any effort at splendour and magnificence, characterize this pretty *bijou*. Draperies of lilac and primrose satin, fastened by his own brilliant and fallacious star, are surmounted by arabesque frizes of great delicacy and beauty, and the furniture is appropriately elegant and simple.

The hotel of the Baron Denon contains the most curious, varied and singular collections of art and antiquities in the possession of any private person in Paris. These treasures, occupying a suite of six rooms, are disposed in the superb armoires of Boule, which once belonged to the apartments of Louis XIV., or are placed

* "I saw him," says Miss Williams, speaking of his reception at the Directory, on his return from Italy, "I saw him decline placing himself in the chair of state, which had been prepared for him; and seem as if he wished to escape from the general burst of applause."

on pedestals drawn from the ruins of Greece, and on marbles from among the columns of Egypt. Pictures, medals, bronzes, drawings, with Chinese, Indian, and Egyptian antiquities and curiosities, are all arranged in an order at once philosophical and chronological, with the intention of throwing a more steady light upon remote times, and of illustrating, by a few curious specimens, the progress of the human mind. In his collection of pictures, Monsieur Denon seems to have been more guided by taste, than aided by fortune. It contains but few of those pictures to which a series of ages has attached an enormous value, but he pointed out to me a waterfall, by Rhuysdal ; a portrait of Moliere, by Sabastian Bourdon ; a head of Parmegiano, by that great painter himself ; as being of singular beauty and value : as also some pieces by Schedoni, and three pictures, by Andrea Schiavone, "*Titon and Aurora* ;" "*Diana discovering the frailty of Calista*," and an "*Aurora awaking*." Besides the rarity of these three little pictures, the elegance of the drawing, strictly resembling the designs of Parmegiano, whom Schiavone imitated and admired, and the richness of colouring peculiar to the Venetian school, render them very precious. A little picture by Callot, painted on lapis-lazuli, is curious and valuable ; and a Madonna, by Guarcino, carelessly giving her son to the arms of Joseph, that she may listen to an angel who is playing on a violin, has a character of *nai veté* and originality, quite as interesting as the execution is beautiful and masterly.

Among a small, but most valuable collection of the most ancient pictures extant, is one by Martino di Messina, the first who painted in oil ; the portrait of a

bishop, by Giôto ; a Maggatio ; a Bellino ; and a composition by Fra. Bartolomi, one of Raphael's first masters.

Among the modern pictures are, the head of a Greek lady, by Madame le Brun ;* a picture of Rosalba, by herself ; and a singularly characteristic portrait of M. Denon, by Robert Le Fevre.

In presenting to my admiration a small cabinet picture, an holy family, by Bourdon, which, he said, might pass for a Caracci, and another by Vateau, M. Denon made an observation, which, as coming from the celebrated *directeur du Musée Français*, is too valuable not to be cited in his own words—“ *Ces deux petites pièces montrent qu'il ne faut jamais juger avec préjugé d'un peintre, avant d'avoir vu ce qu'il a fait de plus beau ; puisque dans ces deux tableaux on trouve, même avec le mauvais style du siècle, la couleur sublime de Titien, le fini précieux de Leonardi de Vinci, et l'élégance de Parmegiano.*” It would appear from this *critique* of M. Denon's that the painters of Louis XIV. did not want genius, but liberty—and it is probable, that these two pieces were carelessly thrown off, by Vateau and Bourdon, in a moment of leisure and freedom, snatched from their hired labours at Versailles and the Thuilleries ; when they were relieved from blue silk robes, and full-

* Madame le Brun is still living at Paris, enjoying great reputation for her talents, and the highest esteem for her character. She had the kindness to invite me, through the Marquise de Vilette, to see her collection, when it should have undergone some new arrangements, for she was then changing her place of residence. But I was obliged to leave Paris, before I could avail myself of her politeness, and gratify my own curiosity, by seeing so celebrated and distinguished a personage.

blown roses—from Apollos and Graces—from Monsieur Le Brun, and Louis le Grand !

In the arrangement of his little collection of pictures, M. Denon has adopted a chronological order, with respect to the ancient masters, which presents a very beautiful history of the progress of the art. He begins with a suite of enamels of the thirteenth century, commencing with La Robier, and finishing with the splendid miniatures of M. Augustin, whom he considers as one of the ablest artists of the day. His collection of medals, engravings, and drawings, is governed by the same spirit of illustration, which adds so much to their interest, and which has always in view the progress of the arts, and the civilization of man. The medals are divided into classes ; those of the Greek cities, of the Grecian kings, of the Roman republic, of the Roman emperors ;—the decline of the art, in the middle ages ; its revival, in the fifteenth century, in Tuscany, by Pisane ; in France, under Francis I. ; in Spain and in England ;—its degradation under Louis XIV. and Louis XV., a period which does not present one medal worth citing, or collecting.

Monsieur Denon, himself, may be said to have been the reviver of this splendid art in France, under the late Emperor ; and his own series of medals, which commemorate the extraordinary events of that short, but wondrous career, will one day claim from posterity a still more passionate tribute of admiration, than that, which the cold-blooded judgment of cotemporary observation, does not, even now, withhold from them. It struck me, (but I know not how far I may be right) that the peculiar excellence of the designs of M. Denon's

own medals, was grace and *finesse*; a sort of moral elegance, in the conception, and a singular delicacy and harmony, in the composition, which peculiarly belong to the tone of genius, and character of the man himself. In any part of the world, that the *medal*, struck for the marriage of the Empress Maria Louisa, and the *passage on grace*,* in the description of the *Egyptian Alma*, had been shown me, I should have discovered the particular *verve* of Denon, though I had never read his works, nor seen his engravings; but judged of his genius only from his conversation.

In looking over M. Denon's rich and extensive collection of medals, which I did frequently, during my residence in Paris, sometimes with the benefit of his own observations, and sometimes with that of foreign artists, or English virtuosi, I was most particularly struck by the beauty and excellence of some of the specimens, which I admired, without any rule or authority, save what nature lent. Among the number, which uniformly possessed a singular attraction for me, was an ancient Syracusan medal, which, through the staining tints of centuries, presented the figure of the nymph Arethusa. Never did art, or nature, create a more beautiful form: all the follies of the old river-god, Alpheus, were to be forgotten, or forgiven, in contemplating this graven image of his mistress. The heads of Lysimachus—of Berenice, wife of one of the Ptolemys, and a Nero,

* The passage here alluded to is too beautiful, to need an apology for citing it—"La grace qui naît de la suppressee des mouvemens, de l'accord harmonieux d'un ensemble parfait; la grace, cette portion divine, est la même dans le monde entier; C'est la propriété de la nature, également départie à tous les êtres, qui jouissent de la plénitude de leur existence, quel soit le climat qui les a vus naître." Voyage en Egypte.

struck me also as singularly admirable. The fine head of Antiochus Euergetes is curious, as being a perfect resemblance of all the medals struck of Buonaparte.

The collection of bronzes, which M. Denon* brought himself from Egypt, some of which he has illustrated in the plates of his great work, are rare and curious, and prove the high and unrivalled perfection, to which the Egyptians had carried the art.

Among his Grecian bronzes, he most values a beautiful little figure of Jupiter Stator ; but he considers the specimens he has obtained of the Chinese workmanship, in this art, as equal, if not superior to every other. Many Roman bronzes, discovered in France, both figures and articles of domestic utility, are to be found in this singular collection ; and a bronze image, of the time of Charlemagne, proves how totally the art had then declined in Europe, by its hands of *or-môlu*, and eyes of precious stones, no unusual specimen of the taste of those barbarous times, when the arts were worse than lost. All that Japan and China ever produced in its peculiar manufactures, of precious, rare, and curious ; all that could satisfy the exorbitant longings of the *china-fancying ladies*, of the Spectator's day, turn the head of a *petite-maitresse*, or out-run the desires of the spoiled child, who, in exhausting every possible form of toy, *cried at last for the moon*, may be found in the apartments and splendid *armoires* of M. Denon.

Porcelain vases, of every form, size, colour, and age ; from the black china, whose antiquity goes beyond date, down to the transparent produce of the present day—

* M. Denon was received, as a sculptor, in the academy of Florence, for the beautiful little figure of a *Bacchante*, the work of his own chisel.

blue cats, that once sold for a thousand crowns a piece, and green bowls, that *Confucius* might have dipped his long nails in; Mandarin beaux, and Braminical gods, josses and pagodas, bamboo *magots*, *crackled china toads*, flowers that resemble nature, and animals that resemble nothing; with Japanese boxes, vases, and temples; India cabinets and ivory screens, specimens of fillagree, and wax-work curiosities, two thousand years old, and ingenious works of taste, fresh from the hands of modern artists,—are here all found admirably arranged, and curiously assembled.

But in all this various collection, which it must have taken so much time, taste, knowledge, and money to have obtained, and to which chance and circumstances must have favourably contributed, there is nothing so much prized, by the enlightened and elegant collector, as his portfolios of the original designs of all the greatest masters—the richest and most valuable collection of this description, supposed to exist. These portfolios are divided into *schools*:—the Italian, Flemish, and French; and, among their immense and various contents, include fifty of the original drawings of Parmegiano, most of which have been engraved, and which have been purchased, at an enormous price; eighty, by Guercino; ten, by Raphael; ten by Julio Romano; and a large collection of the drawings of the pupils of the Raphael school, with some more or less of all the great masters of the Italian and Flemish schools. These transcripts of the *prima intenzione* of superior genius, struck off in all the fervor of first and ardent inspiration, bearing the impress of its freshness and its force, always appear to me more precious and interesting, than the long-studied, long-la-

boared task, that time and judgment work into faultlessness. It is like the sublime command, "*Let there be light; and there was light!*"—Touch, tint, and combination might more finely perfect the finished picture; but in these first conceptions of these bold sketches, the mark divine appears—the mysterious cause of genius, perceptible, but unguessed at, undefined.

Among this curious collection, I discovered some objects out of all rule of classification. A small human foot, in perfect preservation, found among the royal tombs of Egypt, and once perhaps numbered among the charms of some lovely Berenice, or Cleopatra. Two thousand years, at least, have passed away; since it pressed the carpet of the divan, or glided amidst the orange-groves of the Delta. This is the delicate little foot which M. Denon describes in his travels, as being, without doubt, from its symmetry, "*le pied d'une jeune femme, d'une princesse, d'un être charmant, dont la chaussure n'avait jamais altéré les formes, et dont les formes étaient parfaites.*" The model of the beautiful little hand of the Princess Borghese, might form a *pendant* for this exquisitely formed foot. But far from every image of the loveliness and the graces, conjured up by these samples of female beauty, in times and regions so remotely distant, is another *non-descript* relic, which the all-grasping talent of collecting has associated with so much of what is curious and interesting in nature and art; the mask of Robespierre, taken off his face ere one bad trace of the mind it indicated, had faded into the inexpressive lividness of death. It is impossible to look at this faithful model of a frightful original, without shuddering. It is not the countenance of a splendid

villain, urged to a crime by an ambition that ennobles it; it is the face of hireling villany, of vulgar atrocity, of inaccessible brutality, unenlightened even by the intelligence of cunning. It is not even the face of the "*best of cut-throats*," but of a bungler, whose dullness might have marred the act his cruelty sought to perpetrate. It was in showing me this disgusting mask, that M. Denon related to me an anecdote illustrative of the day, and the tyrant that ruled it, which struck me as particularly curious.

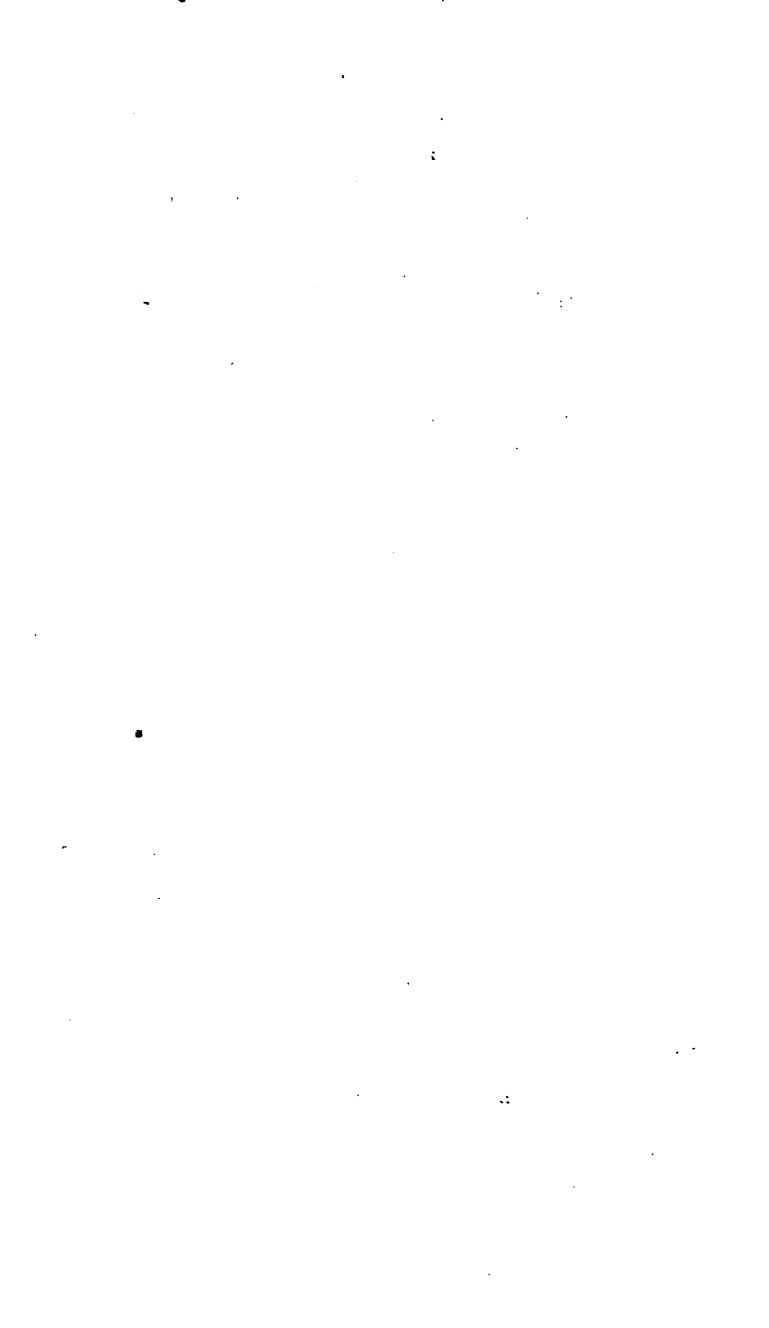
When the French Revolution first broke out, M. Denon was an *envoyé* at one of the Italian courts, and he remained in Italy until the publication of a decree by the French Republic, which proscribed for ever those emigrants, who did not return within a stated period. Returned to France, he was compelled to depend for subsistence upon that talent, he had hitherto cultivated for amusement, and the beauty of his compositions procured him an order from the government, to make some designs for *les fastes républicains*. He was directed to attend a committee for that purpose, which assembled at the Thuilleries, the seat of government, at two hours after midnight; for the hours of darkness and repose were then the chosen periods of council and activity. At this solemn season of the night, M. Denon reached the palace; it was silent and gloomy; an armed guard straggled through its half-lighted and spacious apartments. The anti-room of the council-chamber was occupied by republican officers, fierce and dark as midnight conspirators; a *huissier* in waiting had orders to receive the diplomatic artist, and to conduct him to a particular apartment.

Left alone in a large dimly-lighted room, Denon discovered he was occupying a silent space, that once resounded to every tone of gaiety and pleasure. It was the apartment of the beautiful Marie Antoinette. Twenty years back, he had himself served there, as *gentilhomme ordinaire* to Louis XV. While he was "*chewing the cud of sweet and bitter recollection*," a door opened, and was cautiously closed:—a man advanced to the centre of the room. Observing it occupied by a stranger, he started back.—It was Robespierre! By the light of the lamp on the mantle-piece, Denon could observe the darkening countenance of this king of terrors, who appeared to fumble with his right hand in his breast, as if to claim the safeguard of concealed arms. Denon at once saw the danger of exciting even a momentary apprehension in a mind like his, and he dared not pause to parley, but retreated instantly backward towards the anti-room, his eyes fixed on Robespierre, the eyes of Robespierre fixed on him. A bell on the table of the apartment he had quitted rang with violence. In a few minutes, the *huissier* who answered it returned, with a polite apology from the *dictator* to the designer of the *fastes républicains*. Denon was again introduced, and it was remarkable, that this furious demagogue, with an evident attempt to disguise the feeling he had experienced, from the unexpected presence of a stranger, assumed, in his manners and deportment, an air of high polish and ceremonious breeding, as if he wished to impress upon one, who had himself been reared in courts, an idea of his own gentility, and of his superiority over the "woollen vassals" he was associated with. "He was dressed," says Denon, "like a *petit-maitre*, and his

embroidered muslin waistcoat was lined with *rose-coloured silk*."

Among a few pieces of sculpture, M. Denon possesses a very fine bust of Buonaparte, by Chaudé, to whom Buonaparte sat;—a most rare circumstance! It was indeed, next to impossible to induce him to sit either for painters or sculptors: "When I was painting this picture at the Thuilleries," (said M. Girodet to me, as I stood admiring his beautiful full-length picture of the Emperor, in his coronation robes,) "I do not think I ever saw him *twice* in the same position, or at rest for two minutes together. He was always in motion, restless, and occupied; and I fixed a trait, or caught a feature, when and how I could." While Chaudé was taking his proportions for his bust, Denon was engaging his attention with one of those well-told stories, which charm all who hear them; and in which Buonaparte (himself a pleasant *raconteur*) took infinite delight. When Chaudé had finished, and Buonaparte saw the result of his work, he exclaimed, smiling, "*Comment m'a-t-on amené à cela?*"

"When Buffon talks to me of the greatest works of Nature," said Madame de B* * *, "I always thought he was himself the greatest;" and when Denon talked to me of his collection, I always thought that one hour of his conversation was worth all he had amassed, though three thousand years had contributed to his treasures!





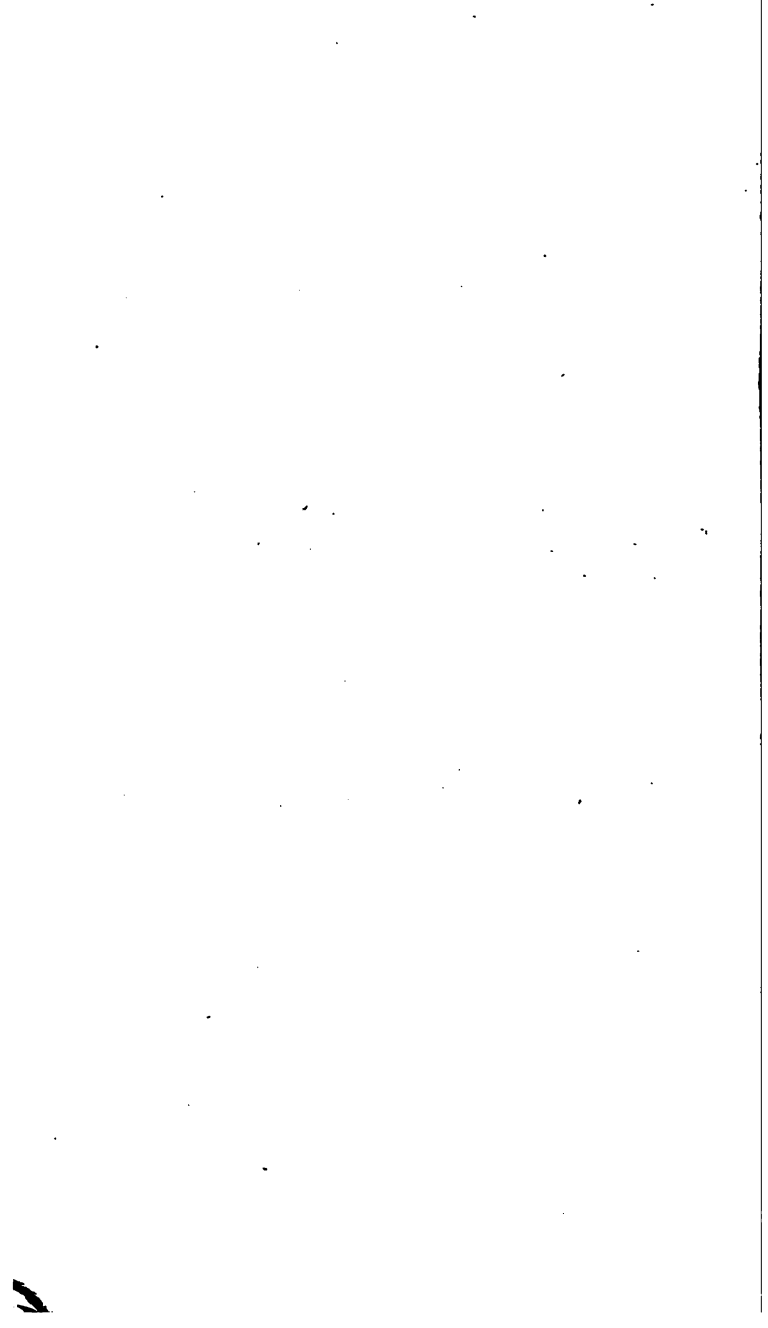












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